

TODAY

SIR ALEC ON HOW TO GET LUCKY

Valerie Grove meets an actor still winning work at 82. **PAGE 17**

ECONOMIC VIEW

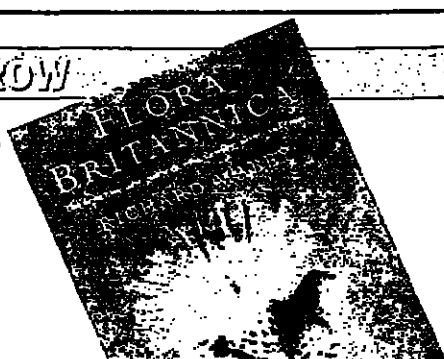
Anatole Kaletsky on the IMF's farewell to Friedman. **PAGE 27**

LYNNE TRUSS BACK KICKING AND SCREAMING

The start of a new weekly column **PAGE 42**

TOMORROW

PAATH ONE OF THE GUILTY... **PAGE 43**



Tanks sent into the West Bank: Arabs plan confrontation in Jerusalem

Israel on brink of war as 50 die in 'new intifada'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL and the Palestinians were close to all-out war last night after Israel declared a state of emergency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The death toll in two days of fighting had exceeded 50.

Israeli tanks were sent into the area for the first time since it was captured from the Arabs in the 1967 Six Day War.

Western diplomatic sources said that the Middle East was closer to a wider Arab-Israeli war than for many years. Syria, Egypt and Jordan are all bitterly opposed to the Likud Government's policy on Muslim holy places in Arab east Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is likely to become a flashpoint again today as Palestinians attempt to converge on the Temple Mount for Friday prayers and force the closure of a tunnel they claim is threatening al-Aqsa mosque, the third-holiest Islamic shrine. It was the opening of a second exit from the 100-year old tunnel this week that triggered the violence. Extra security forces are being drafted into the city.

The Palestinians received encouragement yesterday from the 22-member Arab League which spoke for the first time in three years of an "intifada".

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, cut short a European visit to chair emergency talks with security chiefs. A spokesman for Mr Netanyahu ruled out any closure of the new tunnel exit. The Prime Minister is pressing hard for a meeting with Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, to whom he has spoken by phone. Palestinian leaders, who claimed that towns evacuated under the 1993 peace agreement were being re-

Clinton calls for return to talks

President Clinton last night called on both sides to return to the negotiating table and resume the peace process. The US, which was caught totally unaware by completion of the Jerusalem tunnel, is considering sending an envoy to the Middle East.

The loss of life over the past few days "points to the urgency for both sides to take positive steps to resolve the issues that divide them," Mr Clinton said.

The Foreign Office, in an unusually blunt criticism of Israel, said "actions such as the opening of the tunnel... have caused suspicion and disquiet". It urged leaders on both sides to do all in their power to cool the situation.

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occupied by Israeli forces, declared that only closure of the exit could halt the bloodshed.

Palestinians said that in addition to talks about stopping the fighting, Mr Arafat was seeking guarantees about implementation of the peace deal negotiated by the previous Labour Government. Arab diplomats said there was a possibility of a meeting in Cairo at the weekend.

The Erez checkpoint between Gaza and Israel, where the only previous meeting between the two leaders took place, was transformed into a battlefield. Israeli troops there came under heavy automatic fire as

they used a lorry to rescue an Israeli TV cameraman critically wounded in crossfire.

In the Palestinian town of Nabulus, Palestinian police stormed Joseph's Tomb, a Jewish seminary, after a fierce gun battle with Israeli troops. Two Israeli soldiers were killed before a tank evacuated the remaining soldiers. Palestinians then ransacked part of the seminary.

According to Palestinian witnesses, some of the Palestinian forces protected the trapped soldiers. General Uzi Dayan of the Israeli Army said a "real battle" took place around the tomb.

In many cases Palestinian police opened fire as they saw demonstrators killed and wounded by Israeli fire. "We are defending our hearts. Jerusalem is our heart," one Palestinian officer said as he joined a gun battle in Gaza.

By nightfall at least 39 Palestinians and 11 Israelis had been killed. "It is a picture of war," said Israeli Army radio as the fighting spread from the Gaza Strip, where thousands of Palestinians stormed Jewish settlements, to the West Bank.

Many of the Palestinians seemed to almost revel in the idea of "martyrdom" as they attacked heavily-armed Israelis with stones and bottles. The mobs in Gaza, marching on the isolated Jewish outpost of Netzarim as women settlers and their children covered in bomb shelters, chanted: "The army of Muhammad is back." They attacked with firebombs, bottles and stones.

One settler, Michael Steinbaum, told Israel radio by mobile telephone: "The women and children are in the shelter here praying and the men are outside fighting. There



A Palestinian policeman firing his automatic rifle at Israeli troops. A shell case is being ejected

are Palestinian snipers on rooftops aiming at us."

At Kfar Dorom, another outpost attacked by Palestinians, onlookers saw a boy aged about 13 pick up a rifle from an injured Palestinian policeman and continue firing. Israel radio said that the settlement of Nissana in the northern

Gaza Strip was briefly evacuated, but male settlers later returned.

Many of the sites of the worst fighting were biblical, indicating the religious factor that has re-entered the conflict. Israeli commentators yesterday blamed Yehud Olmert, the right-wing Mayor of Jerusalem, for pressing Mr Netanyahu to go

ahead with opening the tunnel exit.

Shimon Peres, the former Labour Prime Minister, also blamed the Government but dismissed as "speculation and gossip" reports that he was laying the groundwork for an attempt to form a national unity government in an attempt to salvage peace talks.

Gas users get final warning before their bill

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of people are getting final warnings from British Gas that they will be disconnected even though they have not received a bill.

Red notices threatening disconnection are being sent to good payers around the country as a new billing system has thrown the company into a fresh round of chaos and controversy.

British Gas, whose full national billing system has been operating for just a few weeks, has blamed the Government's demands for it to open up the gas market to competition for it having to rush through a nationwide billing operation.

Computer glitches in the £150 million system are sending out reminders, which warn of cutting off supplies, often before a bill is sent out. Hundreds of customers are also querying the amounts of the bills they do receive.

In East Anglia and eastern England 12,000 customers have received reminders without a bill while in South Yorkshire, London and the Southeast, batches of several hundred customers have been similarly affected. The Gas Consumers Council has received complaints about wrong reminders at six of its 11 offices in the past two months.

Customers' anger and fear over the disconnection has been sharpened because of severe difficulties in getting through to British Gas on the telephone. Its phone service is failing to meet the huge demand generated by customers' complaints with many getting a constant engaged tone or answerphone.

British Gas said: "The magnitude of the billing system means we have had some teething problems. We understand that this is causing difficulties and that people

Continued on page 2, col 5

Farmers reap record profits

Farmers in England have just had their most profitable year, thanks to high produce prices, world shortages and EU aid payments. Average net farm income increased by 29 per cent to a record £363 a hectare.

But this year plummeting wheat and potato prices and a slump in beef sales will hit profits. **Page 23**

Merson back in England squad

Paul Merson, the Arsenal forward who has overcome problems with drink, drugs and gambling, was recalled by England for the World Cup qualifying match against Poland at Wembley on October 9. The 23-man squad also includes the former captain David Platt. **Page 44**

Britain: The Times program...
Australia \$1.50; Belgium 1.80; Canada \$1.50; Denmark 1.25; Finland 1.20; France 1.40; Germany 1.40; Greece 1.40; Hungary 1.40; Italy 1.40; Luxembourg 1.40; Malta 1.40; Netherlands 1.40; Norway 1.40; Portugal 1.40; Spain 1.40; Sweden 1.40; Switzerland 1.40; Taiwan 1.40; USA 1.40.

The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>



Duchess to fight in court

THE Duchess of York has decided to take her battle to block a book about her private life into open court, her solicitors announced yesterday.

The decision came a day after she learnt, after a High Court ruling, that such a hearing would mean the prospect of public questioning about her former relationships.

She must also find £500,000 as security for any damages that might be won by her former friend, Dr Allan Starkie, and publishers Michael O'Mara Books Ltd, if the 10-day court hearing, starting on October 7, goes against her. Friends said yesterday that she was determined to fight on. Jeffrey Schneider, her American spokesman, was asked if that meant she was prepared to go into the witness box and face questions about her private life. He said: "The decision speaks for itself."

Geldof in fight over children after raid on ex-wife's home

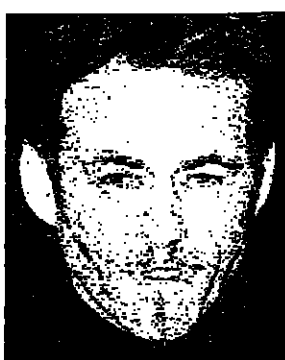
By MICHAEL HORSNELL AND STEWART TENDLER

BOB GELDOF, the former pop singer and entrepreneur, last night launched an emergency High Court action in the Family Division following a police raid on the home of his former wife, Paula Yates, in which opium was allegedly found.

The couple's three children currently live with their mother and her new lover, the singer Michael Hutchence.

The Live Aid campaigner appeared for 30 minutes before a judge in chambers at 6pm over the future of the children. As he left court, he refused to comment. "You know I don't talk about this sort of thing," he said.

Miss Yates, who was in Australia with Hutchence, was represented at the hearing. In a statement they expressed "complete surprise" that drugs had allegedly been found in their Chelsea home following a tip-off.



Geldof: court moves

Scotland Yard said police were examining substances removed on Wednesday by drugs squad officers from the Yates-Hutchence home in Redburn Street.

Geldof, 41, who is believed to be with his children - Fifi Tribbelle, 13, Peaches, six, and Pixie, four, while their mother is abroad - lives

nearby in the £300,000 house in which Hutchence used to live. Ms Yates, 34, and Hutchence are with their daughter Heavenly Hiraani Tiger Lily in Sydney visiting relatives and friends of the INXS singer.

Geldof is no stranger to the High Court. He fought a bitter divorce settlement with Ms Yates after their marriage broke up when she met Hutchence two years ago. In a bizarre settlement, the former Boomtown Rats lead singer vacated the house in Redburn Street to make way for Ms Yates and Hutchence.

It is thought police will await the couple's return before trying to interview them. The couple's nanny is thought to have made a statement.

Last night *The Sun* newspaper confirmed that it was suspending Ms Yates's weekly column pending the outcome of the police inquiry.

Five apples a day keep the cardiac surgeon away

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

SEVERAL apples a day - or any kind of fruit - will keep the cardiac surgeon away, researchers have found.

Eating fresh fruit every day cuts the risk of dying from a heart attack by almost a quarter and from a stroke by almost one third, a study has shown. Overall, those who ate fruit daily

increased their life expectancy by 20 per cent compared with those who ate fruit less frequently.

The findings of the study of 11,000 people, who were followed for 17 years, adds to evidence that regular consumption of fruit helps to prevent cancer. At least five items, such as an apple or orange, a day are recommended. Phytochemicals in the fruit are known to alter almost every stage in the development of cancer but the

mechanism by which it affects heart disease is less well understood.

The results of the study, published in the *British Medical Journal*, were unexpected. Dr Timothy Key and colleagues at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund's epidemiology unit at Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, who started the study in the 1970s, say they had expected to find that heart disease rates were lowest in those who ate a high fibre or vegetarian diet. Although

these diets were associated with lower heart disease rates, daily consumption of fruit had a much bigger impact.

Matthew Gillman, assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, says in a commentary in the *BMJ* that the challenge now is to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables among children. Professor Gillman says national strategies are now required to promote the "five a day" target.

TOMORROW

Prescott: my life with Blair

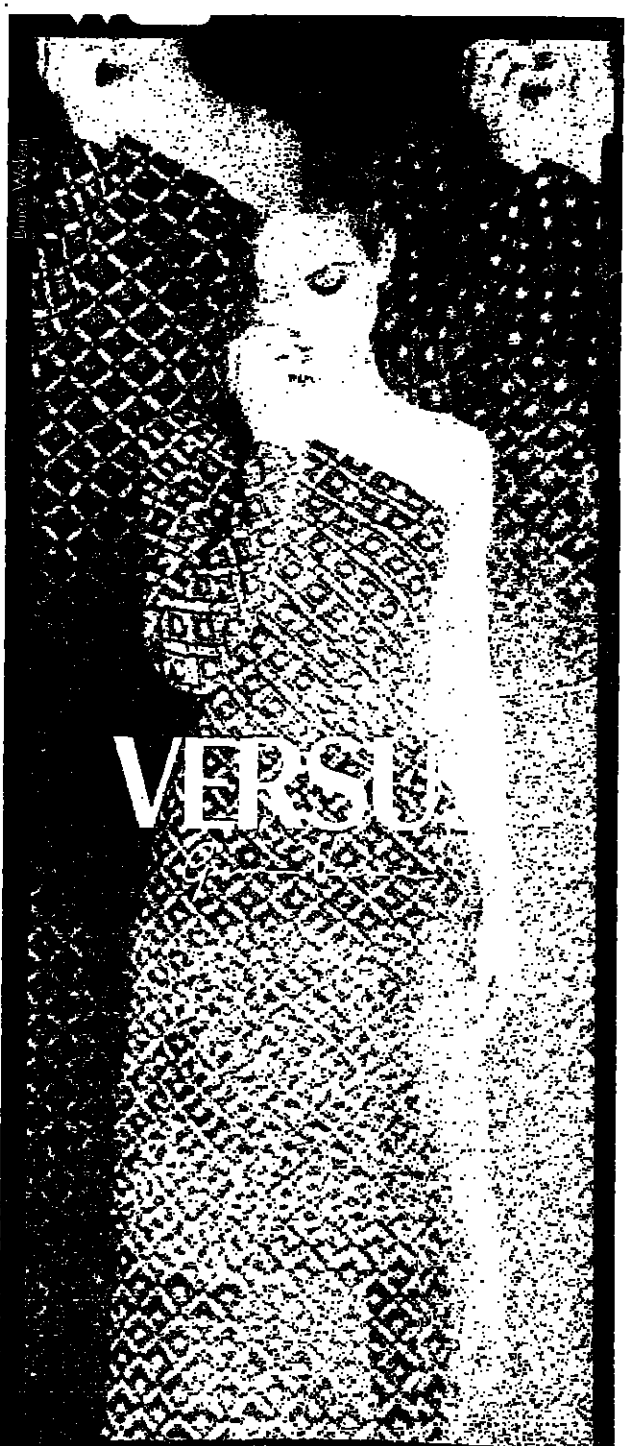
WORKING as number two to Tony Blair can be frustrating and exasperating and sometimes it is a "bumpy ride", according to John Prescott.

Labour's deputy leader occasionally rages down the two flights of stairs between their offices at Westminster to "have it out" with Mr Blair if he disagrees with what he is doing or saying.

But they get on well together and, Mr Prescott says, "it's good to work for a leader who knows what he wants."

A graphic description of the working relationship between Mr Blair and Mr Prescott appears in *The Times Magazine* tomorrow in interviews with Mr Prescott and other Labour figures.

Mr Prescott says it is his "right" to tell Mr Blair what he thinks of things.



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Flurry of flutterings escorts the Lib Dems safely on their way

All week at Brighton a late September butterfly, a red admiral, has been trapped within the hangar of a conference hall where Liberal Democracy has gathered for debate.

Sometimes it has fluttered above the heads of the delegates — a collection of good-hearted, free-spirited people such as no other party can boast. It fluttered energetically yesterday at the words "the right to be different — the right not to conform — is the main reason we joined this party", from a lady in Taunton in a

two-piece Marks & Spencer suit.

Sometimes it has fluttered around the lights of bored camera crews: representatives of a media crowd troubled, all of us, by the vague feeling that we ought to be somewhere else. For hours at a stretch, it seems, my eyes and attention have followed the butterfly. Whole swaths of key debates are, for this sketchwriter, memories only of a butterfly's aerial display.

Well into a good speech yesterday by Alan Beith, MP, the party's deputy leader, the

butterfly had me transfixed again. Shockingly, Mr Beith actually used the word "liberalism" — not the liberal-ism of brave moderns such as Tony Blair who gun down ideology with killer hyphens — and was cheered.

But it is hard to take the new Beith seriously. He has been got at by the image people. Someone has told him to look relevant. This being British Fashion Week, Mr Beith has discarded his funeral director's suit and tripped in wearing what looked like a Paul Smith design: three-piece



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

deconstructed Edwardian. His delivery, too, aimed at the dinner table. I stared at my Agenda — Motion F460: Stay Away From Myanmar (Burma), this Conference urges the British people to avoid Burma from November 16 to the end of the dry season — then at the butterfly.

The butterfly was still there for Baroness Williams of Crosby's speech: Shirley Williams was the conference cigarette, as it were, after Mr Beith's climax. I was musing over a noticeable influx into the hall of a group who looked like thirty-something gay men when it struck me that they had heard media talk of the arrival of Shirley, and supposed it would be Shirley Bassy.

The redoubtable and indefinably doctolly Lady Williams, suited in buttermilk, delivered a heartening speech hardly a line of which bore any resemblance to the pre-released text. Perhaps she

picked up the wrong valise at Heathrow after her flight from America yesterday.

Jane Ashdown, apparently in a crystal tiara but on second glance wearing her spectacles over her hair, applauded politely. Then her husband sprang upon us a little surprise soufflé of a final rallying call. It was scripted to end "Good luck. And good campaigning." but then Mr Ashdown sensed a dramatic hiatus and, unwilling to cry "go back to your constituencies and prepare for government" added "have a safe journey home!"

In a year's time our political world may have changed out of recognition. A beleaguered Blair and Ashdown may be enmeshed in fruitcake plans for detribalising politics. Squabbling about whether Mr Ashdown can be Education Secretary. A Liberal Democrat conference will then be a different affair. We may look back in disbelief at that antinuclear "have a safe journey home", amazed at our lack of any sense of an era closing. I found the exit. So, I hope, has the butterfly.

Birt angers staff with apology for Clarke interview

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN BIRT, the Director-General of the BBC, was accused last night of caving in to pressure from the Conservative Party after apologising for shortcomings in an Anna Ford radio interview with Kenneth Clarke.

Senior presenters at the BBC were mortified by the decision of Mr Birt, conveyed yesterday in a letter to Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, to uphold the complaint against Ms Ford. Dr Mawhinney had said that Ms Ford, who had repeatedly interrupted the Chancellor, had been "openly hostile" on Radio 4's *Today* programme.

A senior BBC presenter said last night: "We feel let down. I would have hoped there would have been more support from on high." Mr Birt said in his letter: "The Editor of the

programme has already made clear his view that there were more interruptions than were appropriate and, with hindsight, Anna Ford agrees."

Mr Birt denied that her final challenge had been intended as a statement of her personal view, but he admitted: "There is no doubt that the end of the interview was unsatisfactory." He said that the interview with Mr Blair did test the Labour leader.

He concluded: "Despite these shortcomings, my view is that Mr Clarke, robust as ever, was not inhibited from putting over his points to *Today*'s audience."

Brian Wilson, Labour's campaign manager, said: "The BBC has openly complained for some time about what it calls undue pressure from political parties. Now, faced with an attack from Brian Mawhinney, it has caved in."

The controversy has caused tension between Mr Naughtie and Ms Ford, who is not noted for aggressive interviewing. "He is furious at being dragged into the complaint. It is better to be accused of being too hard than too soft," said a BBC official.

The BBC denied that Mr Birt's letter constituted an apology. "There is no mention of an apology in this letter, and no direct criticism of Anna Ford," a spokesman said.



Not biting: Adams at the launch of his book at the Irish Centre in Camden yesterday

Angling British media fails to bring Adams to book

BY ALAN HAMILTON

TRYING to get a straight answer out of Gerry Adams like nailing jelly to the ceiling. He is, in other words, a consummate politician.

He spent yesterday in London allowing himself to be baited by the British media, slithering through the muddy waters of the Northern Ireland peace process like a glinting pike but refusing to swallow any hooks. What he said he has said many times before, but not often standing in front of Big Ben.

Mr Adams was in London

not to offer a new initiative on the peace process, but to publicise his autobiography, *Before the Dawn*. In a sharp dark suit and silk tie, with well-barbered beard and shock of neat black hair, he looked every inch the successful American first-novelist on his European promo tour.

He had planned a press conference within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster with the Labour MPs Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Benn, but after Tony Blair's intervention, he had to make do with the patch of grass across the street. He was late, his heavily-built minders, mobile telephones glued to their ears, paced the grass as they tried to establish his whereabouts. He had, it transpired, been meeting Mr Corbyn.

It was soon time to move on to the main grilling of the day, which had been hastily rescheduled to an Irish social club in Camden Town. A barrage of cameras, mikes and notebooks awaited. The man from Heineken, Mr Adams's publisher, declared that the autobiography was "a magnificent narrative of

events, not a political polemic."

Very well, Mr Adams, why in an allegedly factual book did you include a supposedly fictional account of the killing of a British Army officer? "I thought it important, in trying to achieve a sense of a community under occupation, of how some members of that community respond to armed action." Was it based on a real event, Mr Adams? No. Have you ever squeezed a trigger in the manner described in your book, Mr Adams? No.

Who would say were your major literary influences, Mr Adams? Oh, Liam O'Flaherty, Frank O'Connor, Roddy Doyle, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and P.G. Wodehouse.

Pardon? What will happen to the royalties you earn? Royalties from my previous books have gone to republican prisoners, but this time they will come to me, and what I do with them is a private matter. Why don't you sue newspapers which brand you a former member of the IRA, Mr Adams? I can't afford to, but I always send a solicitor's letter.

Corbyn and Benn still face party disciplinary action

BY JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Labour leadership last night refused to rule out disciplinary action against Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Benn, even though their meeting with Gerry Adams at the House of Commons was cancelled.

The two MPs had been threatened on Wednesday with ejection from the parliamentary party if yesterday's meeting with the Sinn Féin president went ahead. Mr Adams pulled out of the meeting early yesterday and instead held private talks with

the MPs at a location away from Westminster.

During media interviews, Mr Adams prompted fresh controversy by saying that he was pleased only one person had been killed during this week's police operation in London. Mr Adams said he had never met Diarmuid O'Neill, the suspected terrorist who was killed, but repeated his call for questions to be answered about the circumstances of his death.

"We are now being told there was no gunfire, that the only shots fired were the shots that killed him," he said. "The spin put out by those who

killed him in two or three days has been found to be the total opposite of what has occurred."

Mr Adams said Mr Corbyn and Mr Benn had been put in an untenable position and accused the Labour leadership of conducting a "McCarthy-style witch-hunt".

Donald Dewar, the Labour Chief Whip, said that good sense had prevailed. Senior Labour sources said that Mr Dewar would wait to see what happened over the next few days before deciding whether action needed to be taken against the two left-wing MPs.

Gas billing confusion

Continued from page 1 cannot always reach us easily. Telecommunications experts were working to resolve the problems.

British Gas has already pumped an extra £6 million into trying to smooth out the system which now unites billing across the country, replacing the previous 60 regional computer centres.

Ian Powe, director of the Gas Consumers Council, said: "British Gas faces serious system difficulties which are causing distress to tens of thousands of customers at a time when competitors are waiting in the wings."

The billing crisis follows news this week that British Gas's service is also in difficulties and failing to respond to large numbers of calls over service contract repairs. Complaints against British Gas are now so high that the Gas Consumers Council said it

was having to close some of its offices periodically to catch up with backlogs.

Customers in Doncaster, South Yorkshire, who had problems getting through to British Gas over mistaken red reminders were also unable to reach their Gas Consumers Office which had been forced to close through overwork. The bills of several hundred customers in Doncaster had not been issued because the computer had skipped a postcode.

Since April when larger winter bills started to be issued the Gas Consumers Council has received 1,756 complaints about meter reading and billing delays.

British Gas said it sends out 76 million bills a year and that the problems involved a tiny proportion. "The billing difficulties we have are not to do with staffing but with technology and our networks."

O'Neill's girlfriend linked to Basque separatists

BY EDWARD OWEN
IN MADRID
AND ADRIAN LEE

THE Spanish girlfriend of the IRA suspect shot dead in Hammersmith has strong links with the Basque separatist movement, Karmele Ereno placed a death notice for Diarmuid O'Neill in the newspaper *Eita*, which supports the aims of the Basque terrorist group Eta.

Señora Ereno is a member of the separatist club in her home town of Amorebieta, near Bilbao. The death notice is accompanied by a picture of an Irish tricolour. It reads: "Ginger. Killed by English police, London, September 23. We'll never forget you. Friends from Amorebieta."

The Spanish Interior Ministry said it was investigating Señora Ereno's background as speculation grew that she may be a go-between between the IRA and Eta, which have strong links.

Herri Batasuna, ETA's political wing, confirmed that there had been a "close friendship" between Señora Ereno and the suspected IRA terrorist, who are believed to have shared a flat in Hammersmith. O'Neill knew that she was a separatist collaborator, a spokesman said.

She is a familiar figure at the People's Tavern, the separatist club in Amorebieta. A member confirmed that she was in Spain. Her brother works for a local aluminium company.

An Interior Ministry spokesman said: "We are checking out this woman to see if there was an order to search for and capture her. But at the moment she is a bit of a mystery."

Señora Ereno gave notice to quit her £130-a-week flat in Hammersmith last November and O'Neill, 27, took over the tenancy. Neighbours said that Señora Ereno, who is in her 20s, had not been seen for about two months. "She was a pretty, slim girl with short dark hair," one said.

Winning attacks media 'frenzy'

Roman Catholic Church leaders in Scotland announced last night that they would no longer respond to "speculative" media inquiries about the Roderick Wright affair.

In an open letter to editors, Cardinal Thomas Winning, head of the Scottish church, sought to draw a line under the scandal. Speaking on behalf of Scotland's seven bishops, he said: "We will no longer participate in satisfying the speculative demands of the media."

The media "frenzy", particularly from tabloid newspapers, had prevented the church from doing its normal work. Churchmen and relatives of Bishop Wright and Kathleen MacPhee had been harassed by reporters. He had to call police to his own home twice.

Welfare spending rises by £6 bn

Spending on the welfare state rose from £83 billion in 1994-95 to £89 billion last year despite a fall in the number of jobless. Social security officials say more people were claiming a whole range of benefits. They predict the demand will continue to rise as a result of an ageing population and an increase in the number of single-parent families.

Police cleared of brothel charge

Gloucester police have been cleared of an allegation that officers regularly used the home of Frederick and Rosemary West as a brothel. The independent Police Complaints Authority said no evidence had been found to support the charge made by Sharon Compton, a friend of Alison Chambers, who was murdered by the Wests.

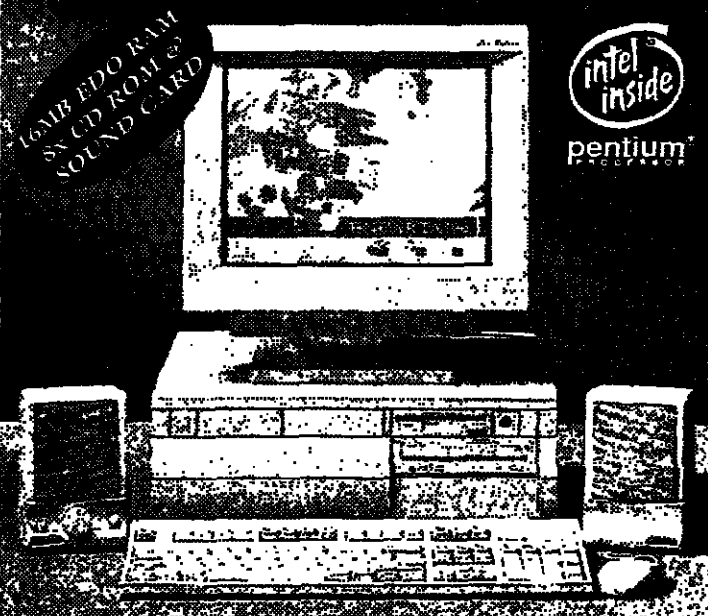
Libel date set for conference

The "cash for questions" libel trial at which John Major and Michael Heseltine may have to give evidence looks likely to open on October 7, the day before the Conservative Party conference begins in Bournemouth. Tory MP Neil Hamilton is suing *The Guardian* over allegations that he received £2,000 for tabling parliamentary questions.

Legal aid pledge to battered wives

Domestic violence disputes and cases where children need protection will be a priority for legal aid under proposed reforms. Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, said. Once he was able to fix the budget for legal aid, now standing at £1.4 billion, he could direct the money to where it was most needed.

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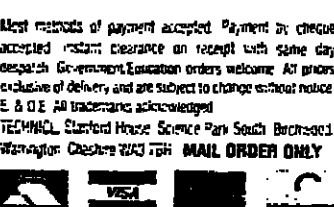
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Yachtsman dies in gun battle with Albanians

By TIM JONES AND HARVEY ELLIOTT

A BRITISH businessman has been shot dead after trying to fight off Albanian bandits boarding his yacht. Keith Hedley, 57, died in the arms of his companion early yesterday on his motor yacht *Carenia*, which was moored at the Greek island of Corfu.

Local sources said Mr Hedley, from Kent, died in a crossfire when a fierce shoot-out developed between police and the raiders, who were armed with automatic weapons.

The couple and two other friends were thought to have been asleep when they were woken by the Albanians, who had crossed the sea in a speedboat. At their narrowest point, the straits are eight miles wide.

Mr Hedley is understood to have confronted the four men as they tried to cut out the yacht's tender. After a brief scuffle, Mr Hedley, his companion and friends are understood to have been restrained by the Albanians as they boarded the yacht and began ransacking it.

As they were being held prisoner, police were called and Mr Hedley, director of a building company, died in the ensuing gun battle. According to one unconfirmed account, he had tried to frighten the Albanians away by shooting at them with his shotgun close to Corfu's main harbour. Last night Kent police said they had been asked by the Foreign Office to inform Mr Hedley's wife of his death.

Boats moored in Corfu have

increasingly become key targets for a growing number of Albanian drugs and illegal immigrant smugglers. The comparative wealth of the island has proved a magnet — and a source of intense frustration — to Albanians trying desperately to improve their own standard of living.

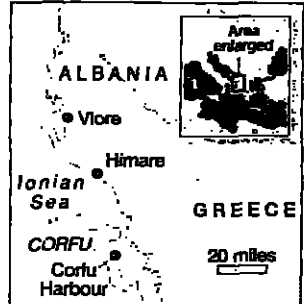
Three months ago British tourists in the Club Med resort at Nissaki on the island's northern coast covered as a group of bandits sprayed bullets into the walls. One of the Albanians was swimming towards two speedboats to untie them when he was spotted by one of an increasing army of security guards who shot into the air to frighten them.

Britons with holiday homes on the island have also been attacked: Lord Rothschild had two power boats stolen from his garden, one of which belonged to Lord Sainsbury.

So far the attacks have not damaged the reputation of Corfu, which is recovering from the effects of too much cheap accommodation, especially in the village of Benitses. Corfu became known as the Majorca of Greece and has some of the most attractive countryside in the Mediterranean. It was particularly popular with wealthy Britons and cricket is still played on the main square. The Duke of Edinburgh was born there.

□ A lifeboat is to be dedicated to two British sailors murdered on a yacht they were crewing in the Caribbean. A ceremony at Bembridge on the Isle of Wight will mark the dedication of the 16 ft inshore craft, to be named *Criddy and Tom* in memory of Ian Cridland and Tom Williams.

They and the American passengers on *Computer Challenger*, John and Kathy Clever, were murdered in 1994 when three Antiguan boarders off the island of Barbuda, intending to carry out a robbery. They shot everyone on board.



Wayne Hemingway's Red Or Dead show, inspired by the mix of London streetlife

Shopgirls bring high street cred to the catwalk

By GRACE BRADBERRY, STYLE EDITOR

THE entire fashion world may be looking to Britpop and so-called Britfash for inspiration but yesterday the streetwear label Red Or Dead confounded everyone by turning to the East and the Indian subcontinent instead.

The designer Wayne Hemingway cited Bollywood and the cultural and racial mix of London streetlife as his inspirations for London Fashion Week. There were crocheted tops suited to a chilly English summer worn over ankle-length negligees. Shalwar kameez tunics were layered over tiered bloomers.

But the real surprise was the models. Half of them were blue-eyed blonds, the others were Asians of whom many had not come from model agencies at all. Jo Phillips, the show's stylist, revealed that she had scoured the streets of Southall and other racially mixed suburbs in search of beautiful but "ordinary" girls and boys.

"I rang every model agency that there was and then I began sending posters to hairdressers and shops," Miss Phillips said. Among the professional models used in this East meets West show were Nifa and Nishan, 6ft twins aged 18 who are half Fijian and half British.

Fashion buyers who have seen several big-name girls this week, including Honor Fraser and Emma Balfour, were stunned to see men and women clearly not from the fashion world appearing in the marquees at the Natural History Museum. One of the male models simply could not

keep his Scholl sandals on and had to retrieve them twice on his way down the catwalk.

The audience was also surprised by the clothes. With so much talk about Britpop, film crews, buyers and glamour groupies from around the world have come to London this week expecting to see the sort of designs that Blur, Oasis and Pulp might wear.

But according to Hemingway, Britpop is moving on to take in Eastern influences and he wanted to reflect this. "The timing has been perfect," he said. He added that his influences came from Britain rather than abroad. "I get more excited by going to Southall or wandering around Wembley, than by heading for the East."

His sportswear also showed influences close to home — the colours of Tottenham Hotspur football club.

Yesterday also saw shows by the more traditional English designers Amanda Wakeley, Roland Klein and Caroline Charles, who made her name in the Sixties, the last time London was swinging. Pearce Fionda, the young British design duo who have only shown two collections previously, attracted huge attention. Representatives of Printemps, the Paris store, and several New York shops arrived at Harrods to see a wonderfully elegant collection of day-to-evening wear.

There were breathtakingly simple sheath dresses with low necklines that draped forward, and very low backs.

Women who would die to have a model figure

Women who say that they would die to have the figure to wear this year's designers' collections fail to realise that the pills some of them take to achieve this aim could put the statement to the test, for slimming pills can be lethal.

Reviewers have been ecstatic about designs shown during the current London Fashion Week. Outfits have been described as stunning, dazzling and outrageous. Outrageous because they leave so



MEDICAL BRIEFING

much of the models uncovered and because the look is one of elegant slowness that can be aspired to, rather than of childlike skinniness. Photographs of the models will encourage many young women to think that, with a bit

more resolve, and a few more pills, they too could have a model's figure.

Recent research, reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, into the background of 95 patients with primary pulmonary hyperten-

sion, a rare but deadly condition, showed that nearly a third of those affected by it had taken appetite suppressants prescribed by their doctors.

Pulmonary hypertension is a condition in which the blood pressure in the arteries leading to the lungs is increased. Usually the disease is secondary to long-standing lung disease, but in primary pulmonary hypertension, the condition as it affects the slimmers, the cause is often unknown. Primary pulmo-

nary hypertension affects women five times as often as men and usually is obvious at 35. Within two to five years of diagnosis the majority of sufferers have died, either from sudden collapse or progressive heart failure.

Slimming pills have been condemned for being habit forming and as a cause of agitation, depression and insomnia. It seems that they will also have to be thought of as a cause of sinister heart failure in young women.

Liverpool player misled police over crash

By KATE ALDERSON

NEIL RUDDOCK, the Liverpool football player, was fined £300 with £200 costs yesterday for obstructing a police inquiry into a crash involving his Porsche.

Magistrates were told that one officer accused him of telling "blatant lies". The central defender, aged 28, who was in the Anfield squad against Finland's MyPa-47 last night, is considering an appeal. Ruddock, in a statement read outside Southport Magistrates' Court by his solicitors, said the case had caused him, his family and Liverpool Football Club "a great deal of distress and embarrassment".

The court was told that in January Ruddock spent all afternoon in The Grapes pub at Formby, celebrating a friend's birthday. Anthony Clarke, from Ainsdale, took the keys to Ruddock's £57,000 Porsche Carrera 911 for safe keeping. In the evening Mr Clarke showed the car to Lesley Richards, 17. He drove off at speed but lost control on the A565 Formby bypass. Witnesses said the car, which was written off, crossed the central reservation and hit trees.

PC Ian Barlow of Merseyside Police said that Ruddock, of Formby, Merseyside, twice told police that the car had been stolen. The footballer was arrested after providing a positive breath-test. Deborah Birrell, for the prosecution, said: "Police believed, erroneously, he was the driver of the car."

On February 1, Ruddock admitted to police he had given the car keys to Mr Clarke. "I didn't want to be a grass," he said. "I know I was wrong but I had a few beers."

PC Barlow told Ruddock that his earlier statement had been blatant lies. He replied: "Not blatant lies. I just didn't tell you what I knew."

Clarke admitted obstructing the police, careless driving and driving without insurance. His case was adjourned until October 24. At a separate hearing, Richards, now 18, admitted obstructing police and was fined £50.

Football, pages 40, 44

Motorcycle stunt-rider emerges from coma

By BILL FROST

EDDIE KIDD, the motorcycle stunt-rider who suffered severe brain damage in an accident last month, has emerged from what his doctors feared might be a ten-year coma.

After a hospital visit yesterday, his family said that Kidd, 37, was expressing emotion by "squeezing the hands of nurses and relatives". The stunt rider was thrown from his machine while trying to leap 50ft over a speeding car at a bikers' rally in Warwickshire on August 11. He lost control after completing the jump and plunged 20ft down an earth bank.

Kidd was initially treated at Warwick Hospital but was moved to the nearby Royal Leamington Spa Rehabilitation Hospital. After seven weeks on a life-support machine he is breathing independently and beginning to recognise and respond to people around him. The hospital said that Kidd was still at an early stage of recovery and could be left with mental or physical impairment.

His agent Bruce Benson said he thought that Kidd's fighting spirit and fitness would help him to make a full recovery. "He will come through this. I strongly believe that, and my prayers and thoughts are with him."

Child sex attacker captured on M6

By RUSSELL JENKINS AND KATE ALDERSON

POLICE recaptured a dangerous child sex attacker yesterday 30 hours after he had escaped from a hospital in Birmingham.

John Mayes, 45, a convicted paedophile, was spotted by a motorist wandering along the hard shoulder of the M6 in Staffordshire and subsequently arrested by a motorway patrol near the Cannock roundabout at junction 11.

A second paedophile, Steve Daggett, 35, convicted of three indecent assaults on young girls but thought to be less of a danger, was still on the run last night from Ashworth Hospital, Maghull, Liverpool, after absconding during a shopping trip on Wednesday.

After Mayes's recapture, the authorities opened an inquiry into how he had been able to evade his male nurse escort and flee from St Margaret's Hospital in Great Barr. MPs expressed their astonishment last night that Mayes, considered by police to be extremely dangerous and violent, was in a hospital for people with severe learning disabilities instead of a secure hospital.

Police earlier mounted guard at the gates of primary schools in Great Barr and Walsall, where he had been spotted shortly after his escape. Some head teachers had kept their children inside their classrooms during the day and others had increased security.

Mothers, picking up their children, spoke of their concern.

Mayes, who has three previous convictions, was convicted at Stafford Crown Court in 1994 of a serious sex attack on a seven-year-old boy. He was ordered to be treated at St Margaret's, where he was held in a locked ward.

He escaped at 9.30am on Wednesday from the hospital grounds while he was being escorted by a male nurse from the recreational facilities to his ward. He had become agitated and difficult to control.

Mohammed Masood, Mayes's consultant psychiatrist, said that discussions would now take place on whether treatment at the hospital was still appropriate or if he should be moved to a more secure establishment.



Mayes: evaded escort

Woman choked girl in quest for attention

By PETER FOSTER

A YOUNG mother who choked babies to the brink of death so that she could be hailed as a heroine when she resuscitated them was convicted of the manslaughter of her own daughter yesterday. A court was told that Nicola Jordan, 20, killed eight-week-old Polly by accidental suffocation.

Exeter Crown Court was told that from the age of 14, Jordan had made a series of attacks on three babies while doing work-experience as a nanny. Over the next four years she made four identical attacks on two other children.

Investigators handling Jordan's case believe she may have been suffering from Münchausen's syndrome by proxy, a variant of Münchausen's syndrome in which sufferers harm themselves to attract attention. In cases of Münchausen's by proxy, sufferers harm others.

Yesterday, after an 11-day trial, Jordan, of Chard, Somerset, was acquitted of murder and convicted of manslaughter and two counts of grievous bodily harm. The court was told that before her death, the child had been admitted to hospital twice with unexplained breathing stoppages.

Sentence was deferred pending reports.

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Surgery sends Queen Mother reeling

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE success of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's hip operation has enabled her to venture a few steps of that most strenuous activity, Scottish country dancing.

The news was disclosed yesterday by her grandson, the Prince of Wales, during a conversation with councillors in Wick, Caithness. The Prince disclosed that the Queen Mother, who loved dancing, had been able to take part again at an informal ceilidh at Balmoral earlier this week.

She is unlikely to have taken more than a few token steps but the news will offer hope to people who have undergone hip replacement. Last November, at the

age of 95, the Queen Mother became one of the oldest patients in the world to have the surgery.

She is still unable to walk or stand for long periods because of a persistent leg ulcer, and on public occasions resorts to her battery-powered golf cart to move among the crowds. Sources at Balmoral yesterday said the Queen Mother had been absent from the gillies' ball, the principal social event during the Queen's summer holiday, at which members of the Royal Family dance and mingle with castle staff and other local people.

The Prince's disclosure of his grandmother's rediscovered agility, however limited, prompted an immediate recollection from Andy Murray of Highland Regional Council, who met the Prince

during yesterday's visit. Mr Murray remembered seeing the Queen Mother dance at a function in Wick Assembly Rooms 25 years ago, when she was a mere 71. "We were doing the *Dashing White Sergeant*, which involves moving around the room meeting other dancers, when we came across the Queen Mother in the middle of the crowd. She was having a wonderful time and was a lovely dancer, very light on her feet."

The Prince told Mr Murray: "She's thrown the sticks away. She's a great dancer. She's incredible, they just don't make them like that anymore." Earlier in the day he told pensioners at a daycare centre in Wick that the hip operation had given his grandmother an extra six years of mobility.

SKY presents the eve of destruction



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THE TIMES Girl aged 11 Death

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Child walks home alone after school locks doors

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Girl aged 3 became trapped by neck after slipping on equipment regarded as safe, inquest is told

Death slide firm faces prosecution

By PAUL WILKINSON

A GIRL aged three died when she became trapped by the neck on a children's slide. As a result, safety standards are to be re-examined and the company behind the slide is to be prosecuted.

An inquest was told yesterday that Amy Grieveson slipped and caught her head in a six-inch gap between one of two handrails and the top of the slide. She was left hanging until her mother found her unconscious. In spite of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and heart massage, Amy died six days later in hospital from brain damage caused by oxygen starvation.

The girl's mother, Kirsty Docking, told the inquest at Newcastle upon Tyne, where she lives, that she had been watching her daughter play on the slide in April before going inside. She said: "After a while I realised I had not heard any noise from her and looked out of the window. She was hanging there unconscious and was a funny colour."

"At first she looked like she was standing up but I realised her feet were not touching the ground. She was trapped between the bars at the top of the slide and I had to lift her up to free her. I rang the ambulance and they gave me

instructions on how to revive her. I gave her mouth-to-mouth to try to bring her round but she was still unconscious."

Sarah Lavine, a medical consultant with the Child Accident Prevention Trust, told the hearing that the slide, made to a design by the Early Learning Centre, complied with current British safety standards but that there were provisions to modify the standard. "That is currently under discussion but was not a provision being looked at when the slide was produced," Dr Lavine said. "The new standard would

eliminate the type of gap in which Amy got her head caught."

"This tragic case shows young children will always use toys and play equipment in a quite unexpected manner. We attempt to make safety standards as tight as possible but it is not always possible to predict what young children will do."

The Early Learning Centre faces court action on Tuesday, brought by Newcastle consumer protection officials under toy safety legislation. Ibrar Sheikh, a technical manager with the Early Learning Centre, said: "The com-

pany has never had any other fatality or serious accident with any of its products. We have a complex system to test products. The slide complies with British safety standards and is properly age-categorised."

"We heard about Amy's case and decided to withdraw the slide from sale so we could make design modifications. We put notices up in shops telling customers about a free modification kit and advertised it in national papers as well."

Richard Ferry, of Newcastle Trading Standards Department,

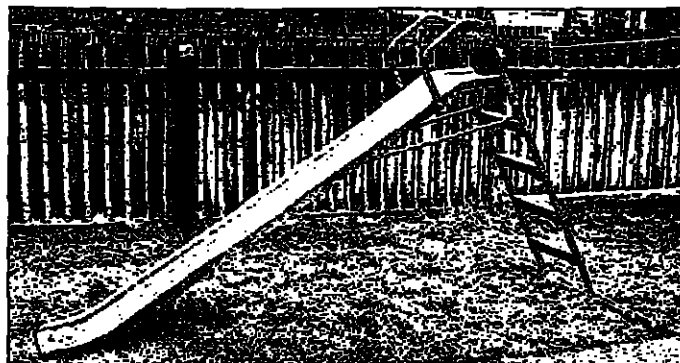
said action had been started against the company after laboratory tests indicated that the slide could be in breach of safety regulations. He said: "Toys should not produce a risk of entrapment or strangulation and proceedings have now begun in respect of this matter."

After the inquest jury returned a verdict of accidental death on the child, Phillip Needham, the company's merchandising director, said: "This has been a very tragic day for us and our thoughts are with Mrs Docking and her family over the loss of Amy. We are a safety-minded company and it is true to say everyone in the industry has been devastated."

This slide has an excellent safety record. It fully meets safety standards and we modified it as soon as we realised what had happened. They are in use every day in our stores and we estimate some two million children a year use them under staff supervision."

"I would agree you cannot take action against every possibility, what with the unpredictability of children, but we try to foresee as many problems as we can. I have three children of my own and know how hard it is to watch their every move. It is impossible. No one can guarantee anything in life is absolutely safe, though."

200,000 WERE SOLD; ONLY 30,000 SAFETY KITS HAVE BEEN FITTED



Modifications were made to the slide after the accident

When a pathologist examined the child's slide, he found that she had been trapped in a 6in gap under one of the two handrails. The rails were 35in from the ground and Amy was 33in tall. The Early Learning Centre withdrew the £69.95 slide from sale on May 2 and reintroduced it with modifications on May 18. A safety conversion kit was introduced for the slides already sold. Although 200,000 people had bought one, only 30,000 have so far taken advantage of the free kits. Helpline (9am-5pm): 01793 444844.



Amy Grieveson died despite her mother's attempts to resuscitate her

Child walks home alone after school locks doors

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A MOTHER has called for an inquiry after her four-year-old daughter walked home on her own when teachers accidentally locked her out of school after playtime. Chloe Parkinson crossed two main roads and walked through a busy one-way system during her half-mile journey home from Chantry Primary School in Gravesend, Kent.

She had not realised that break was over after sitting alone on a climbing frame during playtime. When she discovered that her friends had gone inside, she tried the school doors and found them locked. The child arrived home shortly after 11am.

Last week a girl of 2½ wandered out of an open door at her playgroup and walked half a mile home along a main road. Sandra Golding was only partly dressed when she arrived home only 30 minutes after her mother, Nicola, had dropped her off at Snodland Community Centre.

Yesterday Lisa Parkinson, 24, said of her child: "I was told that she wasn't seen. What sort of answer is that? Then not accompanying that with an apology — it's diabolical."

"The child I thought was safe at school came knocking on my door at 11am. Chloe realised she was locked out and because the playground is open, she was able to leave through school gates which are not locked. She was stopped by a council worker parking his van who thought it was odd that a girl of Chloe's age was walking around alone. She was crying and she told him her name and address. Then he followed her home to make sure nothing happened to her."

The child's grandfather, Alan Parkinson, 57, said: "She also had to walk within one hundred yards of the Thames."

Neighbours have submitted a petition urging greater security at the school. The head, Maxine Havis, said she had been horrified by the incident. "We take the security of the children very seriously. The staff didn't see anybody and thought it was safe to close the doors to stop people getting in."

"It has made us more aware. We have been considering security arrangements in the light of keeping people out of the school, now it has made us aware to keep the children inside."

Rise in CJD cases defies explanation

Cases of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease are rising by 3 per cent a year but the reason is not known. Statisticians are anxious to find out because of the supposed link between a new variant of CJD and BSE.

New figures have exploded a theory that doctors might cautiously have ordered more post-mortem examinations on patients who died from dementia. This makes it more likely the increase is real but experts have not ruled out a statistical blip. The disease is rare, causing an average of 34 deaths a year in a population of 58 million.

Price cut banned

Asda has been banned from selling Alka Seltzer at below retail price. Bayer, its maker, was granted a temporary injunction when Asda, which is trying to abolish price-fixing by drug companies, refused to increase the price by 10 per cent.

Magnetic explorer

It has been confirmed that the explorer David Hempleman-Adams was the first Briton to reach both North and South magnetic Poles. He made a boat trip to the magnetic South Pole in February and reached the magnetic North Pole on skis in May.

Funeral furor

Nineteen men were arrested when fighting broke out between neighbours and mourners at a wake in a flat. Police said several people were injured at Headington, Oxford, none seriously. All those arrested were in their twenties.

Long-distance call

A message in a bottle has been washed ashore in the Outer Hebrides 13 years after it was tossed from a ship near New York. Don Cunningham and Kathy Pacilo's message was found by Leelah Macaulay, 8, of Ness on the Isle of Lewis.

Back in gear

The owner of a stolen bicycle has been traced by police to his home thousands of miles away in Japan. The £3,000 titanium bike was stolen from Shogo Sakai, 67, of Yokohama, when he stopped to eat in Hull during a cycling tour of Britain.

Wonderful NEWS. Britain back in the Red



At the Beck's brewery in Bremen, we've long admired your refreshing regard for quality and tradition: the red telephone box, the milk bottle, pointed policemen's helmets, and your long affair with the unchanging qualities of Beck's.

So we were a little taken aback when you allowed your red boxes to be swept away in a multi-million pound blaze of aluminium and plastic. Bemused, we watched as Sir Giles Gilbert's K6 Jubilee model was uprooted and swiftly relegated from icon of the village green to greenhouse, trendy shower, and on one notable occasion, the centre of a Christmas nativity scene.

Did this, we wondered, signal a growing indifference to the quality of life? Would British beer lovers no longer round the bar top and insist on a beer that insists that its Hallertau and Tettnang hops are steeped in glacial waters? Absolutely not! In fact, the demand for superior quality beer in the shape of Beck's is stronger than ever.

Let's get behind tradition and fine design, let's celebrate the imminent return of the red telephone box and, above all, let's drink to continuing freedom for our beer.

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Villagers weed out organic gardener

By TIM JONES

FOR Tony Woodcock, his small allotment in the Cotswolds was a haven of organic gardening in a chemically laden landscape. But to villagers it was a weed-choked wilderness.

Their views prevailed with the parish council at Upton St Leonards, Gloucestershire, and Mr Woodcock, 58, was ordered to vacate the plot during a heated confrontation with Jacqueline Ireland, the council clerk. "I was furious with her and I admit I raised my voice before she asked me to leave," he said.

"Over the last nine years I have worked thousands of hours on the plot and I have never used any chemicals or sprays because I feel it is wrong environmentally."

The new tenant has scythed through the weeds. Mr Woodcock, a wrought-iron worker from Matson, Gloucestershire, says that he may sue the council. Mrs Ireland said yesterday: "We have complaints from other growers that thistles were growing three feet high on this land."



Tony Woodcock before the allotment was taken away from him: "I have never used any chemicals or sprays"

Child death rates fall as health and safety improve

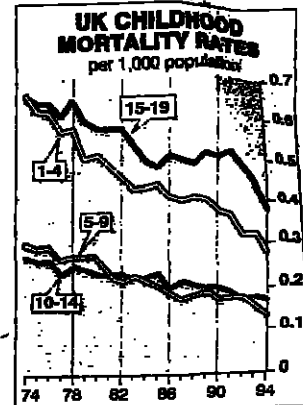
By JEREMY LAURANCE

THE health of children under 15 has improved faster over the past 20 years than any other age group, researchers reported yesterday.

Death rates have fallen by 50 per cent in those aged 1 to 14 and by 62 per cent in infants between 1974 and 1994, according to official figures. The only group to show an increase was young men aged 15 to 44, where deaths rose by 5 per cent between 1985 and 1995, chiefly as a result of violence, suicide and Aids.

Karen Dunnell, head of health statistics at the Office of National Statistics, which published the figures in *Population Trends*, said that the main reasons for the decline were fewer accidents, congenital abnormalities and cases of serious respiratory disease.

The improvement in infant mortality — deaths under one year — was largely due to the fall in cot deaths, down 70 per cent between 1988 and 1992,



helped by government advice to put babies to sleep on their backs. Ms Dunnell said: "There has been a continuous improvement in car safety and in measures to slow traffic such as sleeping policemen. There does appear from evidence collected by the police to be a reduction in the severity of accidents and better medical care may be saving more lives."

Despite the fall in the child death rate, parents do not perceive their children's health as improving. During the 1990s, one in five children was reported as having a long-standing illness but in only half was it severe enough to limit their activities.

Figures in *Population Trends* confirm the trend to smaller families. The average number of children born to

each woman fell from a peak of three in the 1960s to 1.8 in 1994 and 1.7 last year.

For the past 20 years the fertility rate — the number of children born to women of child-bearing age — has been below the level of 2.1 necessary to replace the population. Births are still exceeding deaths, apart from a blip in 1983, because the baby boom generation of the 1960s is coming to its maximum child-producing age, but statisticians expect deaths to exceed births by 2020.

Latest figures show a 33 per cent fall in accidents to children between 1990 and 1994. However, a report in the *British Medical Journal* says that a class divide is opening up in relation to child injury with five times as many children from the poorest social class dying in accidents compared with those in the highest social class. In the early 1980s there was a 3.5-fold difference.

Fire deaths are rising in poorer families and falling in richer families. Dr Ian Roberts, director of the child health monitoring unit at the Institute of Child Health says that free distribution of smoke alarms should be considered after a study in Oklahoma City in the United States showed that free alarms prevented an estimated 39 deaths or serious injuries.

Spanish set record, page 12

"are you still making pointless purchases?"



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Cards

Figs bring taste of fading summer

By ROBIN YOUNG

FRESH figs from Turkey and pomegranates from Spain are now in. As autumn chills creep up there are offers on winter vegetables such as carrots, swede and cabbages. Baking potatoes are also on offer. The ideal baker produces a crusty skin and a floury interior. The best are Record, Marfona and Kays Pink. Desirée, Maris Piper and King Edward are acceptable. Avoid Nadine, Cara, Romano.

Promotions include: Asda: stewing steak £2.18 a kg, lamb chops £6.84 a kg, chickens £3.99 for 2kg, chicken fillets £2.48 for two, papaya 19p each, star fruit 39p each, mango 39p each. Budgens: fresh beef topside/silverside/top rump £4.29 a kg, chicken quarters £1.39 for 500g, Lincolnshire pork chipolatas 59p for 220g, Cornish pasties 49p each, Royal Gala apples 45p lb.

Co-op: fresh whole chicken £4.89 for 2.2kg, premium Lincolnshire sausages £1.69 for 800g, onion bhajis 99p for 32g, deep dish rich beef pie £1.26 for 454g, tomatoes 49p for six. Debenhams: topside/silverside/top rump £1.99 a lb, gammon steaks £1.99 for 340g, size 3 grade A eggs 89p a dozen.

Harrods: smoked salmon pillow £2.95 for 100g, free-range oven-ready geese £8.50 a kg, Munich weisswurst £1.89 for 100g, ostrich sausage £2 for 100g, lamb sausage £1.29 each, Danzre-Blue cheese £12.50 a kg.

Iceland: chargrilled quarter-pounders £1.49 for four, battered cod fillets £2.99 for four, cod Normandy 99p for two, smoked haddock fillets £2.99 for 680g, button sprouts 79p for 507g, summer fruits flan £1.29 for 4/6 portions, chocolate cheesecake.

WEEKEND SHOPPING

£1.99 for 400g, orange and lemon gâteau £1.99 for 10 portions. Marks & Spencer: all beef steaks and joints £2 off, smoked salmon appetisers £5.99 for 18, royal gala apples £1.39 for six, fruit salad £1.99 for 600g, homestyle lemon drizzle £1.29 each.

Morrisons: rump steak £3.29 a lb, silverside £2.19 a lb, pork spare ribs £1.29 a lb, small cleaned salmon a £1.59 lb, fresh mussels 45p lb, conference pears 39p a lb. Safeway: smoked gammon joint £3.99 for 800g, superrim diced beef-steak £2.79 for 454g, fresh chicken £5.99 for 2.5kg, closed cup mushrooms £1.29 a lb, baking potatoes 24p a lb, white seeded grapes 35p a lb, royal gala apples 49p a lb, conference pears 39p a lb, frozen apple strudel 99p for 800g. Sainsbury's: fresh lamb whole leg £4.70 a kg, boneless pork shoulder £2.52 a kg, chicken breasts £3.29 for four, beef rib roast £3.99 a kg, salmon fillet £2.75 for 300g, red potatoes 74p for 2.5kg, Charlotte potatoes £1.25 a kg, savoy cabbage 49p lb, parsnips 49p a lb, basmati rice £3.79 for 3kg.

Somerfield: rump steak £3.04 a kg, pork loin joint £3.20 kg, meat balls in tomato sauce £1.45 for 454g, baking potatoes 17p a lb, mixed peppers 79p a pack, large pineapples 79p each.

Tesco: topside/silverside £4.29 a kg, boneless leg of pork £3.45 a kg, skinless chicken fillets £3.25 for 540g, haddock fillets £1.95 a lb, salmon joints £2.95 a lb, Desirée baking potatoes 24p a lb.

Waitrose: chickens £2.65 for 1.1 to 1.8kg, stuffed turkey thigh £3.59 for 800g, frozen oven chips 99p for 2lb, frozen chopped spinach 69p a kg, Swiss-style mussels 99p for 750g, pure grapefruit juice 97p for 10, Mexican honey £1.35 for 454g.

Brown's top tax rate would cost TV host an extra £300,000

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY AND SUSAN EMMETT

UNDER Gordon Brown's proposals for a 50 per cent top tax rate, the television and radio presenter Chris Tarrant would pay almost £300,000 more on his newly negotiated £3 million salary.

Increasing the top tax band from the current rate of 40 per cent would land Mr Tarrant with a total bill of more than £1.48 million on the three-year contract that he has just signed. The Shadow Chancellor's plans would also mean that Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber — said to earn more than £6 million a year — would pay an extra £600,000 tax, taking his total payment to almost £3 million a year.

Tax experts say that few people earning more than £100,000 would be able to avoid paying more. Loopholes have been steadily closed and there is now such a considerable body of anti-income tax avoidance rules that it is virtually impossible to escape. Among the high earners

who would feel the pinch of a 50 per cent top rate are managing directors of the top 350 FT-SE companies and senior partners and actuaries in law and accountancy firms. Consultants in the National Health Service earn salaries of £30,000 upwards but can more than triple that through private practice.

City dealers, heads of fund management divisions and trading department heads will easily take home £100,000 a year, and often two or three times that in bonuses. Top entertainers and musicians bump up their earnings through royalties.

However, even in the Nineties, the number of women in this bracket is low. Few reach the upper echelons of major companies and law or become chief executives of FT-SE 100 companies.

Maurice Fitzpatrick, tax specialist at the accountants Chantrey Vellacott, does not believe that a 50 per cent rate

would result in the flight of well-paid executives. He said: "If any of our clients came to us wondering whether they should go offshore to avoid these proposals, we would ask them whether they were prepared to uproot themselves for the sake of an extra 10 per cent tax."

In the past, high-flyers have paid accountants to find ways of converting income into capital gains, so that they can defer or avoid tax. Mr Fitzpatrick says this practice is now much less common.

In the Seventies, the top rate of tax was 98 per cent, whereas gains were charged at 30 per cent, making it worthwhile to enter schemes that turned income into gains," he said. "Now the top rate of capital gains is 40 per cent."

"I doubt whether people will spend thousands in professional fees in the attempt to turn income into capital gains, with the risk that they could be



Aiming for the top: Gordon Brown's 50 per cent tax rate would cost Chris Tarrant and Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber hundreds of thousands of pounds

£3m eases strain of early mornings

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE battle for breakfast radio ratings grew more costly yesterday when Chris Tarrant signed a record £3 million deal with London's Capital Radio.

The three-year deal puts him ahead of his Radio 1 rival, Chris Evans, whose £1.5 million contract runs only until late 1997. Mr Tarrant's programme claims two million listeners. Mr Evans, who has recently been criticised for the content

and language of his show, has about seven million. Matthew Bannister, head of BBC Radio, warned him on Wednesday about the content of the show.

Mr Tarrant, who worked as an English teacher before beginning a career in regional radio, had been considering giving up the job because of the 5.30am daily alarm call. He said yesterday that it was his love of the work, not the money, that had changed his mind. "Breakfast radio is incredibly exciting. There's lots

of silly stuff but also for many listeners I am their first point of contact with the overnight news and am able to give updates as they happen."

Mr Tarrant hosts the television show *Man O'Man*, for which he receives £200,000 a year, and owns an Italian clothing shop that brings in £1 million a year. Martha King, Capital director, said that he was worth the money. "He is still the most popular broadcaster in London," she said.

Ousted head calls for curbs on governors

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

THE ousted headmistress of a leading girls' school called yesterday for governors of independent schools to be prevented from abusing their powers in the treatment of senior staff.

Speaking publicly for the first time since her departure from Malvern Girls' College five months ago, Anne Lee said measures were needed to counter the so-called "football manager syndrome" in independent schools. Heads were increasingly vulnerable to dismissal as soon as results or pupil numbers dipped.

Dr Lee is prevented by the terms of her severance agreement from discussing the events that led to her resignation in April. A businesswoman and education consultant with no teaching experience in schools, she clashed with the college governors and left after less than two years in charge. The school was suspended from the Girls' Schools Association over its treatment of Dr Lee. But John Frith, the chairman of governors, accused the association of acting high-handedly and insisted that the school followed "perfectly good" employment practice.

Margaret Rudland, who chairs the association, said it

had received the assurances it had sought about procedures at Malvern. "Subject to a contract being approved, the way is now clear for the next head to become a member of GSA."

Dr Lee recently became a governor of Queenswood, an independent girls' school in Hertfordshire. She intends to use her new position to campaign for a regulatory framework, possibly with legal powers, covering all school governors. In an interview she said: "The important question is — who governs the governors? There is no doubt that increasing competition has led to more short-termism: a lot of heads believe their governing bodies respond too quickly to the league tables or changes in the roll."

Governing bodies should include parents and be much more open, Dr Lee said. "When society is moving towards more democracy and openness, it is a bit of an anomaly that parents and staff cannot find out more about the running of their schools."

Now an education adviser with a variety of clients, Dr Lee said she had not ruled out a return to headship. "It is wonderfully challenging, a very exciting role."

She remained convinced that heads without teaching experience could be accepted by their staff, saying that heads would increasingly need an aptitude for business "because the pressures of running a large organisation are similar in some ways, no matter what the organisation is".

But the demands of headship were not fully recognised. "It is the least researched and most difficult leadership role I know; no other organisation has as many stakeholders as a school. To co-ordinate the needs and wishes of governors, pupils, parents, the local community and often the church is extremely difficult."

Education, page 37



Lee: now an adviser

Teachers' wages hit by agency collapse

BY JON ASHWORTH

POLICE are investigating an employment agency whose collapse threatens the livelihood of hundreds of teachers across Britain.

Schools from Tyneside to Cornwall are thought to be affected by the demise of First Quality Supply Teachers, which provided teaching staff on assignment from at least five offices. Initial inquiries suggest that up to £500,000 may be at stake.

First Quality's founder, Mahmoud el Zabalany, 49, an Egyptian national also known as Sammy, has not been seen for at least two months. It is thought he may have gone to Egypt, South Africa or Australia.

First Quality was a major contractor to Hampshire County Council, which has been contacted by at least 34 teachers who claim to be owed up to £2,000 each. The agency received payments centrally, then forwarded

cheques to teachers on its books.

Police raided First Quality's offices in Southsea, Hampshire, on Wednesday. The telephones had been cut off and there were signs the occupants had left in a hurry. Mail from other First Quality offices in Torquay, London, Manchester and Bristol had been redirected. Police are anxious to speak to Jane Spencer, who appears to be a shareholder in First Quality. DC Peter Davies of Portsmouth Central Police said that potentially hundreds of teachers were involved. In addition to Hampshire County Council, First Quality placed staff on assignment with schools in the West Country, the Home Counties, London, Manchester, Yorkshire and the North East.

Teachers who may have suffered losses are asked to contact Portsmouth Central Police on 01705 321111.

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Blair gets poll warning but remains well ahead

Labour's image dented by 'too dominant' leadership

By PETER RIDDELL

MORE people now regard Labour as too dominated by its leader and divided than at any time for more than three years, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, taken over the past weekend, shows that Labour's image has deteriorated on 12 of 14 measures since last March, while the Tory image has improved on 10 of the 14. This follows a lengthy period when the party images were relatively stable.

Nonetheless, Labour's image remains much more favourable, and the Tories' much less favourable, than in September 1991, at the same stage of the last Parliament. For instance, whereas five years ago the Tories were seen as the party most likely to keep its promises, understanding the problems facing Britain, moderate and having sensible policies, now Labour is ahead on these measures. Similarly, whereas in 1991 Labour was ahead on being

Europe is now the single most important issue facing Britain today for Tory supporters, according to the MORI poll. Europe is singled out by 13 per cent of the whole public and is second behind unemployment. But it is mentioned by 22 per cent of Tory supporters, ahead of crime and law and order. It is rated the most important issue by 23 per cent of Tory loyalists and 10 per cent of those who have switched away from the Tories since the last election.

divided and extreme, now the Tories are.

At present, Labour has a big advantage over the Tories on questions of being concerned about people in need and not being out of touch.

A slightly worrying feature for Labour is the recent deterioration in its image. Since last March, the number viewing Labour as divided has risen from 17 to 25 per cent, but 43

per cent now see the Tories as divided. The proportion regarding Labour as too dominated by its leader has increased from 15 to 21 per cent. The number believing Labour has sensible policies has dropped from 25 to 20 per cent. These shifts follow the Tories' summer poster campaign attacking Tony Blair and Labour and its divisions over links with the unions. There has not, however, been much change in the party's share of voting intentions in the past couple of months.

The Tory campaign may have had some impact on new Labour switchers, those who have started to back the party since 1992. The number of these regarding their new party as divided has risen from 13 to 24 per cent since March and there has been a decline from 41 to 28 per cent in the proportion believing that the party looks after the interests of "people like us".

There has been a modest improvement in the Tories' image this year. Fewer people

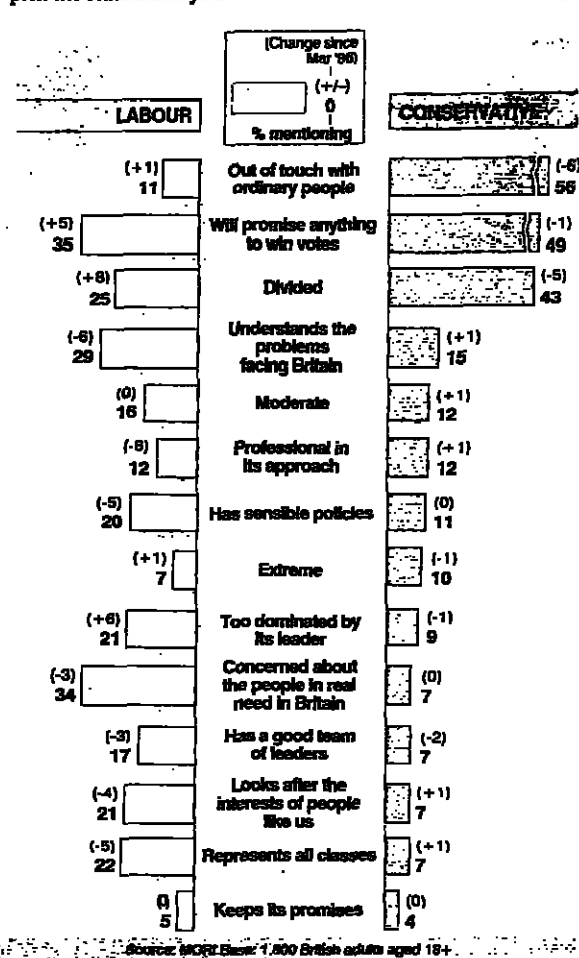
regard the party as out of touch with ordinary people or divided. The Tories have also changed their image for the better among those who have stopped supporting the party since the 1992 election, the target group they are trying to win back. There have been increases in the proportion of such former Tory supporters thinking the party is moderate (5 to 16 per cent), in the number thinking it has sensible policies (3 to 13 per cent) and in those believing it is professional in its approach (8 to 16 per cent).

As *The Times* reported yesterday, the Tories rating has fallen one point over the past month to 29 per cent with Labour up one point at 52 per cent, and the Liberal Democrats up one point at 14 per cent.

MORI interviewed 1,800 people from September 20 to 23. Voting intention figures exclude those who say they would not vote (10 per cent), are undecided (9 per cent) or who refused to name a party (3 per cent).

HOW THE PARTIES COMPARE

Here is a list of things both favourable and unfavourable that have been said about various political parties. Please pick the statements you feel fit the Conservative/Labour Party



Tories need to move beyond mere slogans

RIDDLELL ON POLITICS

The Tory recovery in the polls since the late spring has stalled, but it may be only a pause. The latest MORI poll is a disappointment for the Tories after their "New Labour, New Danger" poster campaign, the divisions within Labour over the unions and the rise in consumer spending and confidence. The party had hoped to have made a bigger dent in the huge Labour lead only seven months before the election. There are, however, some positive findings for the Tories.

The summer campaign has affected Labour's image, particularly among its new supporters. It may have been party rows rather than the demonic eyes poster but there has been a sharp increase over the past six months in the number of people thinking Labour is too dominated by its leader and is divided.

Tony Blair's personal rating has slipped further, to the lowest of his leadership, at just plus seven points (satisfied less dissatisfied). Whereas there was a balance of five to one in his favour among Labour supporters in the early summer, it is now three to one. After the fierce criticism of Mr Blair's handling of the referendum on Scottish devolution, more people north of the border are dissatisfied rather than satisfied with his performance as Labour leader. His rating is highest in London and is much higher among men than women. He also does only slightly better among 18 to 24 year olds than John Major. Mr Blair is very much the candidate of middle-class, middle-aged men.

The Tories' image is improving, especially among voters who have deserted the party since 1992. Satisfaction with the Government and with Mr Major personally has improved a little, notably among Tory supporters.

Most important of all has been the return of the "feel-good" factor. The MORI economic index, measuring those who think that the general economic condition of the country will improve rather than get worse over the next 12 months, is now around balance. It is minus one point

compared with plus two points at the end of August. But the index tends to be positive only for very short periods when living standards are rising strongly and taxes are cut.

These positive signs should not be exaggerated. Despite the shift in recent months, Labour's image is still much more favourable than the Tories' image on most of the key measures of moderation, concern with ordinary people and party division. Mr Blair's personal rating also remains much better than Mr Major's, and, above all, the Labour lead over the Tories is still vast. At this stage of the last Parliament, the two main parties were level. Now, the Tories are 23 points behind. Even if that is seen as an exaggeration, the Tories would still have to recover further, and faster, than any party has previously done in such a short period.

The poll suggests that while attacking Labour may dent its image, it has not yet shifted votes on a large scale. Yesterday's discussion at the political session of the Cabinet focused on the need for a positive message at the party conference. As I have argued before, the Tories have to justify a fifth term as opposed merely to attacking Labour. Ministers have been told to show where their policies would make a difference over the next few years. Let's see if this gets beyond slogans.

The most intriguing question is how the Tories should play Europe. The poll shows that for more than a fifth of Tory supporters Europe is the most important single issue facing Britain today, ahead of crime, health and education. Passions run high. But any departure from the current compromise approach risks Cabinet resignations and a split that could wreck the Tories' slim remaining chances. Europe is both a prize and a poison.

PETER RIDDELL

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Nazi slur raises cheers from SNP

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A SENIOR Scottish nationalist compared a frontbench Labour MP to the Nazi collaborator Lord Haw-Haw in his speech to the SNP's conference yesterday.

Alex Neil, the SNP's policy vice-convenor, was forced to apologise and withdraw the remark about George Robertson, Labour's Scottish spokesman, after an urgent private meeting with his party leader Alex Salmond. But Labour are demanding a public apology from the nationalist party and Mr Neil's immediate resignation.

Mr Neil was given a standing ovation at the conference in Inverness when he attacked Labour's policy of holding a referendum on plans for a tax-raising Scottish parliament. "George Robertson reminds me of someone who was very prominent during the war," he said. "Lord Haw-Haw was an Englishman employed by Nazi Germany with one sole task — to sap the morale of his own people and undermine their confidence."

"We in Scotland have a new Lord Haw-Haw and his name is George Robertson ... When George tells us we can't



Robertson: accused SNP of desperation

afford to be independent, just you say to George: 'Haw-Haw'."

Lord Haw-Haw, whose real name was William Joyce, was born in America of Irish parents. But he was hanged in 1946 after securing a false British passport and working with the Nazis by broadcasting German propaganda from Hamburg.

Mr Robertson said in a short statement: "It is a sign of real desperation when the SNP stoop to comparing the elected Scottish MPs to Nazi collaborators."

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Harman strives to avoid embarrassing defeat on pensions

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

HARRIET HARMAN has begun a final attempt to save the Labour leadership from an embarrassing defeat over pensions at the party conference in Blackpool next week.

The Shadow Social Security Secretary is trying to head off a high-profile campaign led by the former Cabinet minister Barbara Castle of Blackburn for significant increases in state pensions. Ms Harman wrote yesterday to union leaders, constituency parties and pressure groups claiming that Lady Castle's demands would commit the party to spend an additional £69 billion by the year 2030.

This week both Lady Castle and Ms Harman argue their case over pensions in the leftwing paper *Tribune*. On Tuesday, at the Tribune Rally in Blackpool on the eve of the pensions debate, Lady Castle will have another opportunity to enlist support for her plan to raise pensions in line with earnings. She is also calling for the same cash increases in pensions that Neil Kinnock pledged at the last election, and the restoration of Serps.

In a policy paper this summer, Labour angered many party activists by dropping its long-standing commitment for a cash increase in the basic state pension. Unions are still deliberating whether to back a motion including Lady Castle's demands, but there is expected to be strong support from constituencies.

In her letter Ms Harman

also argues that the Castle plan would result in immediate rises in taxation. "There will be a need to be an immediate increase in taxation to pay for earnings uprating of benefits," she says. "Labour would have to make a commitment to a tax increase equivalent to 1.5p on income tax in its first term."

Lady Castle's proposals to increase the basic state pension by £5 a week for a single person and £8 a week for a married couple, would cost an additional £3 billion a year, Ms Harman says. Restoring Serps would also commit a future government to huge additional expenditure.

Ms Harman says that Lady Castle's plans are "bad" for Labour because they would prevent a future Labour government tackling any priority areas such as health and education. The party's priority now would be to limit help to Britain's poorest 700,000 pensioners by encouraging them to take up benefits to which they are entitled. The Labour leadership is exploring a mechanism by which these pensioners would get automatic entitlement.

In her article in *Tribune* Lady Castle argues that if the party fails to raise pensions in line with earnings, the value of the basic state pension will steadily decline and means testing will have to be extended. Lady Castle dismisses Ms Harman's argument that it will cost too much

and will lead to higher taxation.

"Frankly this is just illiterate," Lady Castle says. "State schemes are self-financing because they are contributory and earnings-related contributions rise as earnings rise."

Lady Castle claims that Chris Smith, the previous Shadow Social Security Secretary, admitted that the cost of re-introducing the earnings link would be less than £500 million a year. "Gordon Brown is planning to pay much more than that for his 10p starting rate for income tax, which would not help the majority of pensioners who are too poor to pay income tax."

Lady Castle argues that new Labour policy has pushed Serps to the bottom of the pile and says that it must be restored to its original role. "This conference is our great opportunity. We must refuse to allow our three demands to be swallowed up in some misty compromise and then we must vote for them."



Baroness Williams delivering the speech that won rapturous applause yesterday

Lib Dems warn Blair to expect a hard bargain

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Liberal Democrat leadership warned Tony Blair yesterday that he would have to make key concessions if he wanted the party's support in government.

Baroness Williams of Crosby, a prominent member of Paddy Ashdown's campaign team, told activists at the party conference in Brighton that if Labour won power any help would depend on Mr Blair adopting core Liberal Democrat policies.

She won rapturous applause when she said that the party must protect its principles. "We must not exchange them for a handful of government posts. It is our responsibility to hold any new government to them, to support it in achieving them, to remonstrate or even withdraw our support if it fails to attempt them. That is our pledge to our fellow citizens and to the future of our country."

Lady Williams, a former Labour Cabinet minister, went on: "We have the obligation of holding the Labour Party to the policy, principles and beliefs that we Liberal Democrats hold to be

precious and indeed more important than anything else."

In responding with such enthusiasm to Lady Williams's end-of-conference speech, party activists reinforced their warning to Mr Ashdown to be wary of closer links with Labour. He has said that he is prepared to co-operate if Mr Blair moves further towards the Liberal Democrats on issues such as education, constitutional reform and devolution.

Yesterday he told the conference that the party would continue to fight Labour in every constituency and would discourage tactical voting. "Our message is quite straightforward: the more Liberal Democrats you elect, the more Liberal Democrat policies you get."

But he indicated reluctance to distance himself from Labour, saying: "The first lesson is this: that there are many ways of exercising power and influence. Rule nothing in, rule nothing out. Keep all options open — and campaign to win."

Letter, page 17



Harriet Harman and Baroness Castle, who will clash at next week's conference in Blackpool

MPs highlight Labour split on single currency

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LABOUR Party divisions over a single currency were exposed yesterday when a group of MPs set out the positive case for Britain's participation.

Giles Radice published a pamphlet with 13 other MPs claiming that it would be a disaster for Britain to rule out joining a single currency. The move comes months after 50 Labour Euro-sceptics gave warning of the dangers of monetary union, arguing that it would result in £18 billion in spending cuts and rising unemployment. Several of those MPs have predicted a Commons revolt if Tony Blair rushes into a single currency.

The new pamphlet, *Jobs, Growth and Security*, which will be distributed at the Labour conference, insists that "the single currency, due to be launched on January 1, 1999, offers big advantages for the British people and could play a key role in achieving Labour's economic objectives."

The MPs argue that a single currency would mean lower interest rates, resulting in cheaper mortgages. It would

also lead to greater stability, giving business confidence for long-term investment. British companies and tourists would no longer have to pay for exchanging money.

"Tony Blair is absolutely right to keep open Britain's option of joining a single currency. To rule it out now would be a disaster for Britain, and for our influence in Europe," Mr Radice said. He claimed the support of most of the Labour front bench and many more than the 14 MPs who put their names to the pamphlet.

Asked on Radio 4's *Today* programme whether Britain should sign up to economic and monetary union in the first wave, Mr Radice said if the conditions were right, there would be a strong case.

The 14 MPs are: Giles Radice, Donald Anderson, Clive Betts, Dale Campbell-Savours, Tam Dalyell, Andrew Faulds, Mike Gapes, Keith Hill, John Home Robertson, Calum Macdonald, Denis MacShane, Dr John Marek, Stuart Randall and Barry Sheerman.

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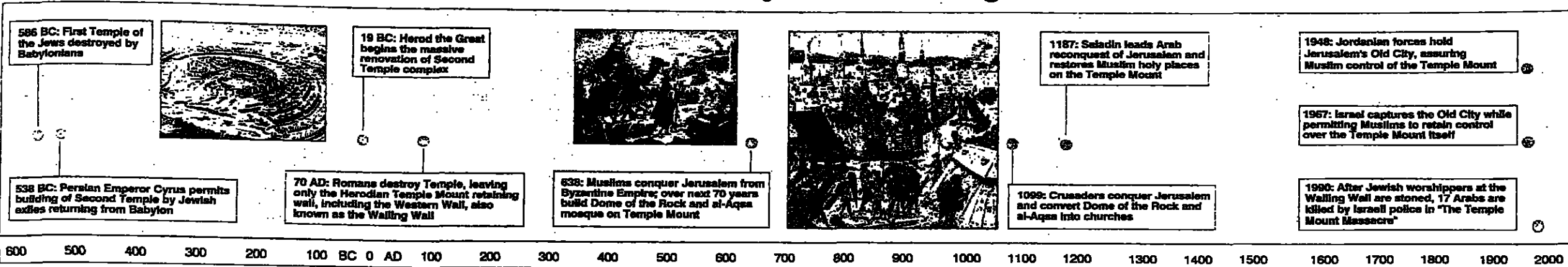
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Holy site that has witnessed millennia of bloody clashes brings Muslims and Jews to brink of war



THE unlikely catalyst for the latest blood-letting between Arabs and Jews is a 500-yard underground tunnel that exposes the Herodian foundations of the Wailing Wall and has been open for some time, with only one entry and exit point, in the Jewish quarter of the occupied Old City (Christopher Walker writes). It was the decision

to open a second exit on the Via Dolorosa, ostensibly to increase access for tourists, that sparked the latest violence and provided the reminder that Jerusalem's holy sites remain at the heart of the struggle between Muslim and Jew in the Holy Land.

The Israeli-dug tunnel was re-discovered a few years ago, having been uncovered originally in the 19th century and neglected. Until the 1980s, when Israel's Ministry of Religion uncovered the narrow underground route that once served as an aqueduct, no one had entered it for more than 100 years and it had remained full of mud and water under homes in the Muslim quarter of the Old City

conquered by Israel in 1967. A warning of trouble came in 1988 when work on the tunnel provoked Arab riots. It was rumoured that Israeli archaeologists were involved in a secret hunt for treasures from the First and Second Temples, including the fabled Ark of the Covenant.

Muslim clerics claimed on Tuesday, after the second exit had been opened by Israelis acting under cover of darkness and with a heavy guard, that the tunnel runs under the Temple Mount and was endangering the stability of the buildings above. They also alleged that the tunnel — whose entrance is only 3ft wide — was a first step by extremist Jews to tear down the

Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa, Islam's third holiest shrine after those in Mecca and Medina. "Those who destroy what is underneath [the compound] will eventually destroy what is above," argued Sheikh Jamal Rifai, an influential cleric. Yehud Olmert, Jerusalem's Likud Mayor and the main driving force behind the new

tunnel opening, dismissed the allegation as ridiculous. He said that the tunnel ran alongside but not underneath Temple Mount, and that Israel respected Muslim administration of the Islamic holy sites. Independent archaeologists support the denial by their Israeli counterparts that the tunnel undermines the foundations of al-Aqsa.

Backstage battle to salvage a peace process in tatters

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

DIPLOMATS yesterday struggled against an hourly rising casualty toll to put together what few pieces of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process remained. But there was a realisation that drastic action would have to be taken if even the venerable of mutual confidence that underpinned the 1993 accord was to be restored.

The backstairs negotiators, including Ed Abington, the American Consul-General in Jerusalem, were only too aware that another deadline looms which could make yesterday's bloodshed fade into insignificance: at today's weekly noon Muslim prayers, Palestinians have vowed to converge on al-Aqsa mosque, the site of the tunnel which sparked the latest fighting.

right-wing Jews opposed to any further implementation of the peace deal, negotiated by the former Labour Government, whose hand was strengthened.

"We have seen that a monster has been created in our midst in the person of the 30,000 Palestinian police force that we allowed to be armed under our very noses," said Moti Cohen, a supporter of Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Government. "How can anyone ask us now to pull out troops from [the West Bank town of] Hebron and leave the Jewish residents there to the mercy of these so-called policemen? They are terrorists and nothing more."

Mr Cohen, a reserve army driver, had few illusions that anything remained of the peace process. "This is war. It is war and nothing short of it," he said without any apparent regrets. Like many similarly-minded Israelis, he has been

suspicious of the motives of Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority. He seemed resigned to the fact that Israel would have to go back to controlling the 2.2 million Palestinians by force.

The ferocity of the Palestinian reaction was seen by many Israeli commentators as the price paid for the inaction by Mr Netanyahu over moving the peace process forward.

Leading Palestinians like Saeb Erekat, the Jericho-based negotiator, disclosed that they had publicly and privately been warning the new Israeli Government of the resentment boiling among their people. "It became clear to the Israeli Government that the fear of a new intifada is not a vain one," wrote Oded Granot, a commentator in the daily *Maariv*.

"It was not the tunnel-opening alone that led to the outbreak of rioting in the territories, but the accumulation of frustration from what appeared on the surface to be a complete deadlock in the peace process."

Amid serious objections being voiced from the Israeli Right about the future role of the Palestinian police, many of them former guerrillas with little discipline or training, Hemi Shalev, another *Maariv* columnist, wrote: "A continuation of the existing situation will quickly drag everyone back to the era of blood, intifada, terror and mourning. This time with 30,000 armed and revenge-hungry Palestinian policemen lined up against the Israeli Defence Forces."



Netanyahu: he was told of boiling resentment



An Ultra-Orthodox Jew in the tunnel near Temple Mount that sparked the violence

Nowhere to hide in Ramallah's gun-swept streets

IT WAS difficult to know where to hide in the streets of southern Ramallah yesterday, with the gunfire shifting direction as easily as the hot afternoon winds.

At first the greatest risk came from being caught in the crossfire between angry stone-throwing Palestinian youths, shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest), and Israeli soldiers perched on the summit of nearby hills.

But the situation became doubly dangerous after Palestinian police entered the picture and began firing over the heads of the youths at the Israeli troops above them.

From then on, it was impossible to predict where a new outbreak of violence might occur, as the action switched from one building or street to another.

Journalists crouched with Palestinians behind any shelter they could find. Sometimes the groups would dare to move during a lull in the shooting, only to hear the frightening crack of renewed automatic gunfire as they ran out into the open.

Along with a BBC crew, who wore helmets and bullet-proof vests, I sat on a roof for some time, while rubbish lorry at our backs acted as an effective shield against incoming Israeli fire. On a rooftop across the road, we could see Palestinian police firing back at the Israelis.

Not long afterwards, we heard tales of cameramen and photographers being wounded and taken to hospital.

One Australian photographer, Paul Jones, and Sharon Abbad, an Israeli female colleague, had a narrow escape after being stranded on the brow of one hill for three hours. They remained prone

The new intifada is being fought with bullets as well as stones, Ross Dunn reports from Ramallah

the entire time, scared to move as bullets whistled and ricocheted only yards away.

Eventually deciding to brave the Israeli sniper fire, they waved a white cloth as they moved down the hill before sheltering behind a retaining wall of the closest building. A Palestinian ambulance later came to their rescue.

As he was sheltering from the crossfire at his home, Atef Alawneh, Deputy Minister of Finance in the Palestinian Authority, said the shootings marked the start of a "new intifada, only this time it is with guns, not just stones. It is not a peace process. It is a killing process," Dr Alawneh said, crouching near a window to observe the mayhem.

Palestinians, he said, were deeply angered by the "humiliating policies" of Benjamin Netanyahu's Government, including an expansion of Jewish settlements and a continuing military closure of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He said that Israel must stop these actions if there were to be any hope of reviving the peace negotiations. The minister added that Palestinians were in a mood to fight. He declared that he was not sure if even Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, could now stop the rioting.

Onslaught by Islamic militia turns Kabul 'into ghost town'

BY ZAHID HUSSAIN AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

WITH forces of the rebel Taliban Islamic militia poised on the edge of Kabul, Afghan government troops appeared yesterday to be abandoning the capital, witnesses said.

A correspondent in the city said it was "like a ghost town", with troops abandoning checkpoints. Tanks and lorries laden with troops had been seen heading north away from the city, he said.

Taliban sources in neighbouring Pakistan had earlier claimed that their militia forces, which already control most of Afghanistan, had entered the city from the east and were only three miles from President Rabbani's palace. Taliban seeks to topple the President and enforce strict Islamic rule.

Official sources have denied

that Taliban forces have entered the city, but government troops guarding the main road east of Kabul confirmed that the rebels had seized the nearby military academy.

Thousands of civilians and foreign aid workers fled the besieged city, some hanging out of packed buses or riding on the roof. Other residents crowded markets in central Kabul to stock up on food and essentials, fearing that fighting would soon reach the streets of the city, which has been under rocket attack for years.

"Basically, the city is cornered," said Esther Robertson of the Care British aid group. "We feel that it is better to go now while we have a chance."

Hundreds of fighters have reportedly been killed on both

sides in the two-day battle for the capital, in which Taliban forces have attacked on three fronts. The Islamic group received a serious setback in an attempt to take over the city when Maulvi Borjan, its commander, was killed in a battle near Pule-Charaki, an eastern district of the capital.

Yesterday the area was strewn with the bodies of Taliban fighters. The Government claimed to have killed 150 rebels, while losing only three of its troops, adding that 21 soldiers had been wounded. But a Taliban spokesman said 100 government soldiers had been killed in the battle for the military college, six miles from the city centre.

Taliban sources in the Pakistani city of Peshawar claimed that the militia had captured

the military academy after a fierce battle.

Afghan government sources, however, have strongly denied the claim and said that an attack had been repulsed. The sources also claimed that forces loyal to President Rabbani were holding back the Taliban forces ten miles outside Kabul.

Suleman Shah, the Afghan Consul-General in Peshawar, said that the Taliban forces had been pushed back and fighting was restricted to Pule-Charaki.

A Pakistan Foreign Ministry official claimed that Taliban militia forces had also moved closer to Bagram airport, Kabul's main lifeline. It was expected that the airport would fall to the attacking forces at any moment.

Six-month gap in 'Filegate' records

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

SENATE Republicans have discovered a six-month gap in White House records showing who read improperly-obtained FBI files on hundreds of party officials.

Seeking an explanation for the discrepancy, with its echoes of the 18-minute gap on President Nixon's Watergate tapes, the Republican-controlled Judiciary Committee is trying to subpoena Mari Anderson, the aide responsible for the logbook. But she has gone into hiding.

The White House insisted the gap was the result of nothing more sinister than bureaucratic inefficiency. "I believe the [logbook] wasn't kept. We tried our best to do it. There was a period of time when we didn't," said Craig Livingstone, the former head of the White House personnel security office which obtained the files.

The White House also released copies of the outdated Secret Service lists of White House passholders on which it claims Mr Livingstone's office based its requests for the FBI files. Throughout the "Filegate" scandal it has insisted the requests were merely a bureaucratic blunder, not an attempt to dig up dirt on Republicans.

The gap lasts from March to September 1994, when Miss Anderson left the White House. Orrin Hatch, the committee's chairman, said Miss Anderson was evading US marshals trying to serve her a subpoena to testify.

Astronaut back home

New York: After 75 million miles of travel, and 188 days without a shower or a hairbrush, Shannon Lucid, the American astronaut, yesterday returned to Earth from her six-month stay on Russia's Mir space station (Quentin Letts writes).

Mrs Lucid, 53, whom NASA has taken to calling "the Queen of the Universe", was greeted by her husband and was said to be in "great shape". Owing to the effects of her long stay in space, however, she was unable to walk on her own, and needed support from NASA medical personnel.



An Airbus A300-B4 jet is prepared at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York for its first flight for Pan Am.

The American airline returned to the skies yesterday after five years' absence

New take-off for Pan Am

company, which went bankrupt partly as a result of the Lockerbie disaster, has been

of its former executives, Martin Shugart. "We have a very powerful brand name that gives us instant market recognition," he said. The company will initially concentrate on a small number of commuter routes in the

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Van Gogh masterpiece worth £25m 'is a fake'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A PAINTING attributed to Vincent Van Gogh and worth an estimated £25 million may be a fake, according to French press reports, alleging that an investigation into its authenticity has been covered up.

The doubts about the painting have added fresh controversy to a story involving allegations of corruption, greed and a lawsuit that has already cost French taxpayers millions of francs.

Jardin d'Auvers, believed to have been painted by Van Gogh just days before his suicide in July 1890, is due to be sold at auction in Paris next December, following the death of its latest owner, the banker Jean-Marc Vernes.

According to a report in *Le Canard Enchaîné*, a journalist at *Le Figaro* carried out an investigation into "doubts among experts over the authenticity of this work". The resulting report has not been published, the satirical newspaper claimed, because Vernes was a "big purveyor of funds to the owner of *Le Figaro*, Robert Hersant".

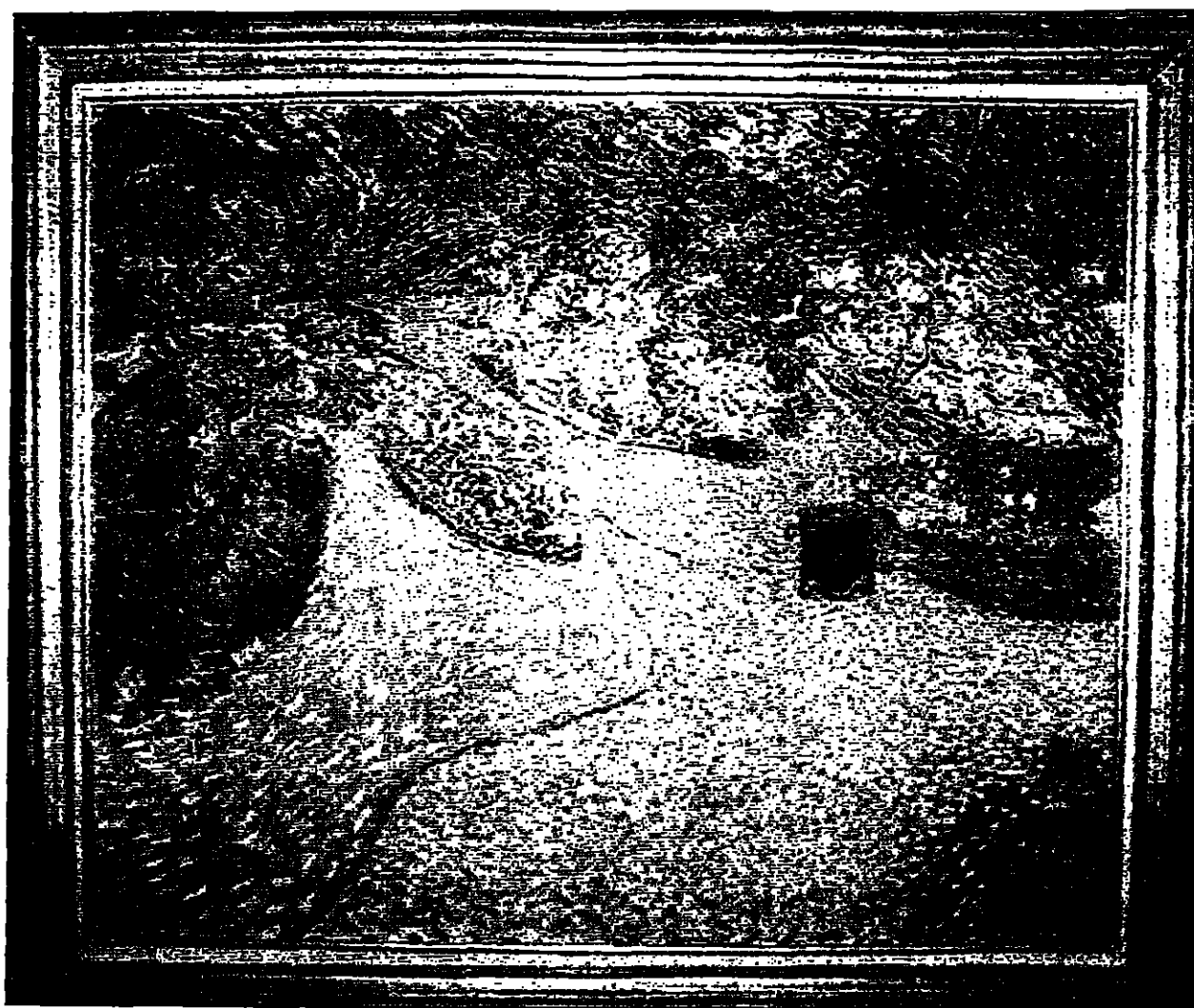
Sjraar van Heugten, conservationist at the Vincent Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, has insisted that "there is not a single doubt about its authenticity", a view backed by prominent Van Gogh scholars. The claim that the painting may not be genuine, however, is proving highly embarrassing to the French Government.

Jean-Jacques Walter, the art collector who sold the painting to Vernes for Fr55 million in 1989, later sued the French state, claiming that he had been prevented from realising its full value since the Culture Ministry had classed *Jardin d'Auvers* as a national treasure and banned him from selling it abroad.

Last February, France's highest civil court estimated the painting's value on the international market at Fr200 million (£26 million), and ordered the Government to pay M. Walter Fr145 million in compensation.

The extraordinary saga of the painting has also been tinged by corruption allegations. In 1994, M. Walter's son alleged that in the 1980s the

family lawyer had been approached to make a deal in which an export licence for the painting would be provided in exchange for massive bribes. M. Walter claimed that former Ministers of Culture, Jack Lang and François Léotard, had demanded £5 million and £3 million respectively. Both



The painting, *Jardin d'Auvers*, attributed to Van Gogh, has already cost French taxpayers millions of francs

politicians have strongly denied the claims. Questions about the painting's authenticity relate to its uncertain provenance. One catalogue cites Johanna Van Gogh-Bonger, the painter's sister-in-law, as the original owner, but another names Amédée Schuffenecker, a col-

lector with a highly dubious reputation who sold a number of fakes. Schuffenecker's brother, Claude-Emile, was a friend of the painter and is known to have executed a number of "pastiche", including at least one of Van Gogh's paintings. Several experts believe the

Government may make a pre-emptive bid for the painting before the auction on December 9. Having already paid to have the painting in France, the state may now feel obliged to come up with millions more, if only to reassure voters that their money has not been spent on a fake.

Spanish birthrate falls to lowest level in the world

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

SPANISH women are giving birth to fewer children today than women anywhere else in the world, an extraordinary record for a country once a bastion of Roman Catholic family values.

According to figures published in the newspaper *El País*, Spanish women aged between 15 and 49 have an average of only 1.2 children — below the European average of 1.5, and dramatically lower than the global rate of 3.1. British women, by comparison, have 1.8 children per head.

The Spanish Government is slowly awakening to an alarming demographic truth: since the minimum birth rate needed by a society to renew its population from one generation to the next is 2.1 children per mother, Spain will find itself in 25 years with a shrunken and aged population. Already, 5.5 million of Spain's 39 million people are aged over 65 years.

Spain's birth rate has been declining remorselessly since 1970, when the country's women had nearly three children each. At the time of General Franco's death in 1975, the figure was 2.84. Yet the most precipitous decline was witnessed between 1980, when the birthrate was still a healthy 2.2, and 1989, when the figure stood at 1.37. However breathtaking the

decline, the reasons for it are not difficult to discern. Post-Franco Spain is a decidedly less patriarchal place, with women enjoying an independence that matches that of any other country in the Western world. Nearly 55 per cent of all women are in full-time employment, the highest rate in Spain's history. This child-bearing generation, broadly defined, is the first which has been encouraged both to take up higher education and to cultivate a professional ambition.

In a nutshell, Spanish women are more autonomous, studying longer, marrying later, and increasingly working outside the home. In addition, although abortion remains limited to cases of rape and risk to the mother's life, the Pill and condoms are freely available.

Significantly, the Government does not exert pressure on women to produce children either, as it did in General Franco's day, when "motherhood prizes" were awarded to fecund women for their contributions to the patria. In fact, childbirth would seem almost to be discouraged. The Spanish Government spends less on family benefits than any other EU country, and tax breaks for families with children are decidedly ungenerous.

Leading article, page 17

Hong Kong to have a royal send-off

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A SENIOR member of the Royal Family will join British troops and civilians at a sunset ceremony on the Hong Kong waterfront on June 30 to mark Britain's final departure from the colony.

The ceremony will take place at the East Tamar site on Hong Kong island, home of the old British military headquarters, before a separate event at the Hong Kong convention centre at midnight to mark the formal handover to China.

Details of the two ceremonies were finalised yesterday at a two-hour meeting in New York between Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and his Chinese counterpart, Qian Qichen. The two ministers also agreed that Britain will maintain a 180-strong consulate-general in Hong Kong after the handover, the largest British consular office anywhere.

About 50 of the staff at the new consulate now being built on Supreme Court Road will be British diplomats, with the remaining 130 local staff. The same functions are now performed by a staff of 80 at the Joint Liaison Group and the Trade Office, of which about half are local people.

Serious differences remain, however, over China's plans to establish a Provisional Legislature before the handover, which would overlap with the elected Legislative Council that Peking plans to scrap.

Britain originally had wanted the formal handover ceremony to be held outside, like the separate British event, to accommodate the many dignitaries who are expected to attend.

Instead, the ceremony will take place in the spectacular glass extension now being added to the convention centre, which can hold some 4,000 people.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27 1996

Cegetel deal aims to extend market influence in Europe

BT stakes £1.1bn in French venture

By ERIC REGULY

BRITISH TELECOM made its second-largest foreign investment yesterday by agreeing to pay £1.1 billion for a 25 per cent stake in a company formed to compete with France Telecom.

The investment in Cegetel largely completes BT's European strategy, which is designed to give it broad exposure to the Continent's top markets. Since 1993, BT has formed joint ventures in Spain, Germany, Italy, Sweden and The Netherlands. Switzerland and Belgium are its remaining targets.

Sir Peter Bonfield, BT's chief executive, said the Cegetel deal is part of the strategy to make continental Europe part of "our extended market". Cegetel will apply for a full operator's licence, allowing it to compete in every sector of the market when deregulation comes into effect in 1998. Currently, it is limited to providing corporate and mobile-phone services.

Cegetel brings BT into partnership with Compagnie Générale des Eaux, the water-to-healthcare group that has targeted the telecoms industry as its next growth area. Générale owns an effective 50 per cent of Cegetel. SBC, formerly South Western Bell, the American regional phone company, has 15 per cent and Mannesmann, the German industrial group, has 10 per cent. The ownership levels may vary somewhat when the final agreement is made.

BT has provided the majority of Cegetel's cash reserves. Its investment values the new company at £4.4 billion. BT will also provide technological expertise such as customer service and billing systems, hardware such as network switches, and its Concert portfolio of international services.

The other partners are to provide non-cash assets, chief of which is Générale's controlling stake in SFR, the second-largest mobile-phone company in France, which is 20 per cent owned by Vodafone, the UK's largest mobile phone company.

SFR will provide the bulk of Cegetel's growth until it receives a full telecoms licence. SFR now has 700,000 customers and claims to be recruiting 40 per cent of all new mobile phone subscribers. It expects to be profitable by 1998 after posting a loss of £769 million last year, and forecasts annual sales of £16 billion by 2000.

If it receives a full licence, Cegetel would be able to provide fixed-line services to residential customers. To do so it will either have to build its own network or agree an interconnection regime with France Telecom.

Analysts said that the interconnection deal, the more likely scenario, would be crucial to Cegetel's viability. If France Telecom charges too much, Cegetel will have trouble becoming comfortably profitable.

In a separate deal, BT said that it is bidding for the telecoms network of SNCF, the national train system. If it wins, BT would have an instant national transmission system for voice and data traffic. BT would probably transfer the system to Cegetel.

BT said that Cegetel will be "marginally earnings dilutive" in the short term. The £1.1 billion investment was exceeded only by BT's £4.3 billion purchase in 1993 of 20 per cent of MCI, America's second-largest long-distance carrier.

Pennington, page 25
Difficult number, page 27



French connection: Philippe Germond, left, SFR managing director, with Sir Peter Bonfield, BT chief executive, yesterday

Managers of big firms still lead way in pay

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

TOP managers in large companies are earning an average of £86,000 a year or £1,654.80 a week, according to the Office for National Statistics' New Earnings Survey. Managers received 6.2 per cent more than last year's unpublished level. Top managers in the period after the Greenbury report on boardroom pay are far ahead of their nearest rival, company treasurers at £862.10, and then medical practitioners at £814.60.

The level for top male managers is even higher, at £1,733.30 a week, or more than £90,000 a year. The bottom-paid job for men, by contrast, is listed as kitchen porters, at £164.40, or £8,500 a year. For

women, doctors still top the pay league at £706.90, since there are statistically too few top company managers for a valid entry, while the lowest-paid job for women is also a kitchen porter, at £142.90. According to the ONS overall average earnings now stand at £351.70 per week, or about £18,300 a year. This is a rise of 4.1 per cent on last year. Average earnings for men in April, the NES' sample point, were £391.60 and for women £283, showing little change in the ratio of female to male earnings.

The NES showed that the earnings gap in Britain continued to widen, with the weekly earnings of the high-

est-paid 10 per cent of employees rising 5.4 per cent compared with the lowest decile, which saw a 4.3 per cent rise. Regionally, East Anglia saw the largest rise in earnings, at 5.4 per cent, and Greater London the smallest, at 3.2 per cent.

The figures provided trade unions with a new target for a minimum wage as Government figures lifted the level of a proposed pay floor to £4.41 an hour.

Unions will use the NES figure to push bargaining claims with companies and to increase pressure on the Labour Party to set a precise statutory national minimum wage figure.

Newton avoids Imro fight

By ROBERT MILLER

NEWTON, the fund management group looking after £10 billion, has backed down from confrontation with a City watchdog and agreed to pay an £85,000 fine for rule breaches.

Imro, the regulator for fund managers, said that Newton had agreed the settlement before a full hearing in front of a disciplinary tribunal after

failing to prevent overdrafts on client money accounts and then failing to tell the authorities "promptly and fully". Newton also did not take adequate action to prevent a re-occurrence, Imro said.

One overdraft run up on a client account was for more than £2 million at one stage. It continued at more than £1 million for five business days and was not fully cleared for

nearly two weeks. Newton has reimbursed £63,247 in interest to clients with overdrafts. It must also pay costs of £34,000, and pre-trial costs that could easily exceed £100,000. Newton said it felt it had been treated harshly, but decided not to go to a full tribunal in the wake of the Jardine Fleming and Morgan Grenfell affairs.

City Diary, page 27

Brewing helps Guinness to toast record half year

By CLARE STEWART

A STRONG first-half contribution from its brewing activities helped Guinness, the drinks group, to a record half-year profit. For the six months to June 30, pre-tax profits rose 5 per cent to £357 million, beating City forecasts.

Tony Greener, Guinness chairman, said that the interim results marked a further step for the group in meeting its "twin objective of growing the business and raising the return to shareholders".

Earnings per share rose 6 per cent to 12.3p, while the dividend is being increased 8 per cent to 4.55p.

Operating profits in the brewing arm rose 5 per cent to £119 million. Boosting this



Greener: twin objective

increase was a recovery in the Irish beer market which helped the Irish business to lift volumes 7 per cent. Increased marketing in the UK paid off as consumption of draught

Guinness hit record levels, while in the US volumes topped 30 per cent.

Newer products such as its Kilkenny Irish beer also had a strong first half, while, in its pubs division, the group continues to roll out its Irish Pub outlets. Some 200 have opened this year with the most recent, in Vienna, taking the total to 1,000. A year-end target of 1,250 is planned.

The sales pattern in United Distillers, the larger spirits arm of Guinness, was more variable in the first half. Profits dipped from £257 million to £255 million, while there was a 4 per cent drop in Scotch volumes.

The shares fell 6p to 448½p.

Tempus, page 26

Jardine Fleming executives moved

By ROBERT MILLER

ROBERT FLEMING, the private merchant bank, has unveiled a far-reaching reshuffle among top executives at Jardine Fleming after the Hong Kong firm was fined £700,000 by a City watchdog last month.

Flemings, which has a 50 per cent stake in Jardine Fleming Hong Kong's oldest established merchant bank, said yesterday that James Bruce, currently head of global capital markets in London, was returning to Hong Kong to join the Jardine Fleming board. He will also sit on a new ten-strong supervisory board which will comprise four Robert Fleming directors including John Manser, chief executive, four Jardine

Matheson executives including Alasdair Morrison, chairman, and two from Jardine Fleming.

Robert Thomas, former chief executive of the Hong Kong operation and who had his authorisation to conduct investment business withdrawn after Colin Armstrong, a Jardine Fleming trader, was alleged to have diverted profits from market deals into a personal account, is to retire.

So too is Alan Smith, chairman of Jardine Fleming. Between them the two men, both in their fifties, have worked at Flemings for more than 50 years and are expected to receive undisclosed lump sum payments on retirement.

England's farmers harvest record profit

By JON ASHWORTH

FARMERS in England have just closed their books on their most profitable year, thanks to a combination of high prices for produce, world shortages and EU aid payments. But celebration would be premature: the bad news is, it is all downhill from here.

Plummeting wheat and potato prices, and a slump in beef sales, are

this year, according to a study by Deloitte & Touche, the accountant. But conditions are still better than in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when agriculture came under severe pressure.

Last year, average net farm income increased by 29 per cent to a record £363 a hectare. Deloitte & Touche found. Income ranged from £717 a hectare, for the most profitable farms, down to £104 a hectare.

Much of the pain was through

sharply improved prospects for wheat and other combinable crops, which account for 62 per cent of typical farm production in England. Grazing land, mainly dairy farming, accounts for about 14 per cent.

David Turner, a senior manager with Deloitte & Touche Agriculture at Cambridge, said world grain shortages and high oilseed prices had fuelled farming incomes. The pound's weakness had made British produce more attractive to overseas buyers.

The figures do not include the impact of the BSE scare, which struck late in March, close to the end of farmers' financial years. The dairy sector had a "pretty good" year, helped by higher milk prices, while sheep and pigs had shown an improvement.

Disappointing world grain harvests had boosted sales of wheat, the UK's biggest crop. China showed a huge upturn in demand.

Mr Turner said better farm management played a big part in the gains.

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Swiss cut discount rate to low of 1%

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

SWITZERLAND'S central bank yesterday cut its discount rate by half a point to just 1 per cent, matching a historic low in what analysts described as a clear signal that it wanted the strong Swiss franc to weaken.

Traders pounced on the surprise news to sell the franc against the dollar and mark. Swiss money-market rates also fell and prices of short-term debt futures surged, but Swiss shares shrugged off the first discount rate cut since December.

A Swiss National Bank (SNB) statement said the move, which takes effect today, was in line with a recent decline in Swiss money-market rates. These rates have fallen below 2 per cent amid a generous flow of liquidity from the central bank.

The Swiss franc fell against the dollar and German mark on the news. The dollar was trading around Sfr1.2521, up from 1.2425 before the news. The mark was up around 82.27 Swiss centimes per mark from about 81.90.

Analysts suggested that the SNB was moving away from its strict traditional adherence to money supply targets, and instead turning its focus to the franc, whose strength has hampered the Swiss economy by having an adverse effect on crucial exports.



Mike Handley, managing director, said the group was restoring much of its lost margin through lifting the selling price

Shake-up knocks McBride

BY FRASER NELSON

McBRIDE, the own-label household products group, saw pre-tax profits fall to £20.7 million from £27.1 million for the year to June 30 after incurring restructuring costs of £6.3 million.

The company, which floated on the stock market last year, said it had resolved the severe production problems at its main plant in Barrow, Cumbria, after spending £1.9 million on redundancy measures and losing £4.4 million through other related costs.

Overall, sales advanced 10 per cent to £162 million, which left underlying profits 4 per cent higher, at £162 million. The surge in raw material prices, which sent its shares plummeting in January, reduced margins from 36 per cent to 33 per cent. Earnings dropped to 9.5p (20.9p). A final dividend of 4.45p, due on November 18, makes a total of 6.7p. Shares rose 13p to 139p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Asda refuses to sell Alka Seltzer tablets

ASDA, the supermarket group, has lost the latest of its battles over pricing of over-the-counter medicines. Bayer, the German drugs group and maker of Alka Seltzer, yesterday won an injunction that prevents Asda from selling the anti-indigestion tablets for less than the price set under the Resale Price Maintenance agreement. Bayer increased the price of its 30-tablet packs of Alka Seltzer by 10 per cent to £3.29, and also asked the supermarket group to sell the group's smaller packs, the contents of which it had reduced from 12 to 10 tablets.

Asda has now withdrawn all 30-tablet packs from its 207 stores. "We do not believe a price increase of five times the rate of inflation can be justified. We would rather not stock the product than pass on such a price rise to our customers," said Nick Cooper, corporate lawyer for Asda. Asda's campaign against price maintenance began a year ago, when it cut the price of branded vitamins. The Office of Fair Trading's report on resale price maintenance is due within weeks, and Asda is hoping that it will recommend a review of the pricing structure for over-the-counter medicines.

Yule Catto confident

YULE CATTO, the speciality chemicals and building products company, said a record year was again in prospect after reporting a rise in pre-tax profits to £17.4 million from £15.96 million in the six months to June 30. Earnings rose to 10.6p a share from 9.5p and the interim dividend is lifted to 3.6p a share from 3.2p. The shares fell 4½p to 393p. Profits from chemicals rose to £16.5 million from £15 million, but building products slipped to £2.8 million from £2.9 million.

Northern Rock deal

GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE is to provide general insurance products to the 190,000 customers of the Northern Rock Building Society in a partnership deal announced yesterday. The new service will be launched on January 1 and premium income in the first year of operation is expected to total around £65 million. Other new products would be developed in the future, Guardian said. Northern Rock has already announced its intention to demutualise and become a bank.

Irish output increases

INDUSTRIAL production in the Irish Republic rose by a seasonally adjusted 5.4 per cent in May after a 1 per cent drop in April, according to figures released yesterday by the Central Statistics Office in Dublin. Seasonally adjusted figures for the three months to May 31 show a decrease of just under 1 per cent from the three months to February 29. On a year-on-year basis, output rose by almost 10 per cent. The pharmaceutical and electrical engineering sectors recorded the biggest annual increases, of 5.3 per cent and 2.4 per cent, respectively.

World Bank savings

THE World Bank said in its annual report yesterday that it had cut its administrative budget by 3.6 per cent in the current financial year. The report, published just before next week's annual meetings of the Bank and the International Monetary Fund in Washington, said that disbursements from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development were up \$700 million to \$13.37 billion and those from the International Development Association were up \$181 million to \$5.88 billion. **Debt triumph, page 27**

Balance of payments surplus calms worries over trade gap

BY OLIVER AUGUST

BRITAIN'S foreign trade gap has widened but economists say that worries about a trade shortfall are placated by the surplus in the balance of payments.

In July, the gap grew from £1.1 billion to £1.2 billion, while the August trade deficit in goods with non-EU countries improved from £700 million to £500 million, the Office

for National Statistics said yesterday. David Smith, UK economist at Williams de Broe, said: "As long as the big surplus on investment income from abroad continues there will be no real trade deficit worries."

The current account of the balance of payments showed a £300 million surplus in the second quarter.

The £1.2 billion gap exceeded analysts' expectations by a wide margin. They had forecast £800 million while the non-EU trade balance was expected to be £750 million.

These deviations were attributed to forecasting difficulties, Marian Bell, Treasury economist at the Royal Bank of Scotland, said: "The global trade balance is very cyclical

and not hugely significant, and has been largely overshadowed by the recent current account surplus."

The trade figures also showed a big rise in car exports. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, commented that this increase clearly demonstrated the competitiveness of the British car industry. "They show that its

expertise, innovation and efficiency are recognised by the rest of the world. In July we exported cars worth £803 million, an increase of more than 50 per cent over last year."

But Margaret Beckett, Labour's Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, said that the trade figures exploded the Conservative claim that Britain was the "enterprise centre of Europe". They showed a continuing and substantial deficit both in trade with Europe, £2.9 billion in the first seven months of 1996, and with the world as a whole, £8.5 billion so far this year.

Earlier this month the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders had confirmed that the increase in car production in the United Kingdom had been export-led. Mr Lang insisted: "I am sure that this improvement will be sustained by events like the launch on to the market of the Jaguar XK8 next month," he said.

EU rejects social chapter fears

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S social chapter opt-out threatens jobs and weakens competitiveness, the European Commission said yesterday in a strong defence of Europe's employment legislation which denied the social chapter was a "late 20th century version of the Black Death" for business.

Padraig Flynn, EU Social Affairs Commissioner, made a plea to the UK Government to end its opt-out from the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty,

which ministers immediately rejected. In a speech in London, Mr Flynn attacked the way the social chapter "is being used to spread fear and loathing of the European Union." He denied that the social chapter was a "socialist Darth Vader intent on the destruction of employers."

Mr Flynn, speaking at a conference organised by City law firm Beachcroft Stanley which was chaired by David

Hunt, the Conservatives' former Employment Secretary, said the social chapter was merely a device to allow Europe to make progress on social legislation where there was strong support for it, "not a sinister plan to 'terminate' businesses".

He said: "The social chapter is not the late 20th-century version of the Black Death. It is merely a process, and an inclusive and productive process at that. It takes us forward, not backwards."

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.07	1.91
Austria Sch	17.54	16.14
Belgium Fr	51.69	47.39
Canada \$	2.540	2.080
Cyprus Cyp£	0.756	0.701
Denmark Kr	9.95	8.85
Finland Mk	7.67	7.02
France Fr	8.40	7.75
Germany Dm	2.52	2.31
Greece Dr	388	363
Hong Kong \$	12.71	11.71
Ireland £	115	95
Ireland Pt	1.02	0.94
Israel Sh	5.34	4.69
Italy Lit	2472	2217
Japan Yen	168.50	170.50
Malta	0.603	0.546
Netherlands Gld	2.804	2.574
New Zealand \$	2.37	2.15
Norway Kr	10.64	9.84
Portugal Esc	261.50	233.00
S Africa Rd	7.82	6.90
Spain Ptas	205.50	192.50
Sweden Kr	10.95	10.15
Switzerland Fr	2.07	1.89
Turkey Lira	144000	139000
USA \$	1.659	1.529

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT



IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

• HAND GUNS TO GO

Michael North, lecturer at Stirling University, whose daughter was shot at Dunblane, writes for the first time.

• HIGHER EDUCATION TRENDS

Working part-time? On a short contract? Taking early retirement? Higher Education Trends in today's THES looks at the casualisation of academe. Plus our annual update of HE statistics.

• ACADEMOPOLIS

The North West of England has the largest concentration of students in Europe. THES has special reports on how universities and colleges are working to help regenerate the region.

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■ Readers who do not collect 10 tokens can still apply to register with AT&T and get free calls worth £5 using the discount card. Call 0800 064 2211 between 7am and 11pm any day until October 31, 1996, quoting reference 08-NP-TM-A-1-28.

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line in your home. Once you are connected, all you need to do is dial 143, followed by the number. You will automatically access the AT&T network and be able to take advantage of AT&T's competitive rates. Examples of AT&T CountryCall costs compared with the cost of BT basic rate calls include —

■ a five-minute weekday-evening call to America with the CallAmerica plan: AT&T 84p, BT £1.41.

■ a ten-minute weekend call to Australia with the Call Australia/NZ plan: AT&T £3.44, BT £4.41.

These prices are effective from October 8, 1996, and include Vat.

The AT&T price includes a 3.53p call connection charge. AT&T has a quarterly membership fee of £3.99 for CountryCall plans and £5.99 for CallWorld.

The full terms and conditions of this offer appeared on Monday.



CHANGING TIMES

Decision time over South West Slowdown looms in the MBO market National Power's strange change of heart

Lang reaches the water jump

GERALD HOLTHAM of the Institute for Public Policy Research, which is to new Labour what the Fabian Society was to the old, has had a bright idea. To stop being so unpopular, privatised water groups should turn themselves into mutuals by using "windfall profits" to buy back their shares.

Rewriting history is always fun. There was, indeed, a case for that sort of structure at privatisation. But if risk-bearing shares were eliminated now, regulation would have to transfer the risk to customers, so losing any incentive for companies to improve their efficiency. As things stand, shareholders own the companies and Ian Byatt, the regulator, must look after the customers. He now has a unique opportunity to help those in Devon and Cornwall, whose water supplier is easily the most unpopular of the lot. And he can thank that resurgence of capitalism, the takeover bid.

South West Water has received two putative bids. The obligatory Monopolies and Mergers Commission reports on both should be thudding onto Ian Lang's desk at the Department of Trade and Industry today. The MMC usually says bids are against the public interest unless the bidder offers Mr Byatt enough price cuts to offset the loss of one of the ten monopolies whose differing

performance gives him ammunition to fire at laggards. In this case, the downside for regulator and consumer is as bad as it could be. Wessex Water is South West's neighbour, and Mr Byatt thinks Severn Trent may already be too big for anyone's good.

Both the MMC and Mr Byatt may have been tempted to blackball Severn Trent or to set it stiffer hurdles than Wessex. But the case for spreading the load on South West customers is strong: the fate of government could rest on their votes next spring. They, too, should hope for competition between bidders.

In theory, Mr Byatt holds all the cards. In practice, it is hard to deny customers any price cuts offered, so bids become a foregone conclusion and the benefits to customers depend on negotiating skills. In the North-East, Lyonnaise des Eaux won on points. In the South West, it is a political necessity that customers should really feel the difference. If the MMC has not set a tough enough test, Mr Lang should do so. He should insist that customers measurably gain as much as shareholders. A simple

test would be to veto any bid unless the net present value of price cuts until 2005 tops the bid premium to SWW investors.

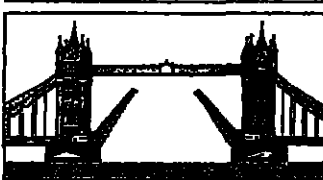
SWW is already valued at about £230 million more than before bid rumours started, though its shares would in any case have risen as management performance improved. On that basis, customers could expect immediate price cuts of at least 16 per cent a year. If Wessex or Severn Trent bid more, as they would need to, they would automatically have to offer bigger price cuts to match. For once, customers' and investors' interests would indeed be mutual.

Too good to last?

IT is with great sadness that we announce the death of the management buyout at the age of 15. After a difficult childhood, friends and relatives had hoped for a more peaceful adolescence, but the past two years of frantic over-indulgence took their toll. No flowers by request.

Or perhaps not, depending on

PENNINGTON



whom you believe. KPMG Corporate Finance, a keen tracker of MBOs, management buy-ins and the other weird fauna of the venture capital jungle, yesterday announced that the unprecedented boom years were running out of steam and might be at an end. The reasons were compelling: the evidence of a slowing rate of transactions quite clear.

The third quarter — don't be pedantic, I know it has yet to finish — saw the lowest number of transactions worth £10 million or more since the start of 1994. In terms of the total value of deals done, it was the lowest since early 1995. The main reason is sellers asking too high prices; buyers always say that, but there is a tendency to relate what you

want for your business to current stock market multiples, and these are undeniably high.

KPMG also says many of the deals companies were desperate to close before any election are done, and it is certainly clear that mergers and acquisitions activity is low — just look at how few takeover battles are currently running. Furthermore, cash balances are high, so companies have no great need to hve off businesses to reduce debt.

Other venture capitalists are less sure, though. 3i, the biggest of the lot, detects no discernible slackening of the rate of deals walking through its doors. Ditto Schroder Ventures. Gordon Bonnyman, at Charterhouse Development Capital, thinks likewise, but he points out that everything runs in cycles, and the MBO boom will one day have to turn down. This looks about right, and the above reasons suggest now is the time.

The market last overheated in 1989 because financiers were paying silly prices and putting in too much debt as against equity. Inevitably, economic slowdown sunk some of those businesses.

After two extremely good years, a degree of renewed caution is understandable. But what fun while it lasted.

Alternating currents

NATIONAL POWER is in a cheerful mood these days. Investors are hearing of a bright future of ambitious overseas expansion and a healthy 20 to 25 per cent of the UK's generation output by the year 2000.

But wait. Is this not the same National Power that told the Monopolies and Mergers Commission that it expected to lose market share to the new independent generators, leaving it with just 13.9 per cent to 20.5 per cent of the market? It seems these figures, formally laid before the competition authorities, have taken a little revision since the company was telling the world how taking over Southern Electric, a regional electricity company, would not consolidate the industry to an unacceptable level. The story then was that the two generators were at the mercy

of hordes of new generators queuing up to take advantage of weak gas prices and start pumping out cheap power. Goodness. National Power said, brushing away a tear, there might one day be hardly be anything left of the once-massive monolith.

One veto by Ian Lang later and market expectations are quite different. Why suddenly so cheerful? The firming of the gas price, a spokesman explains. We just don't see as many new generators keen to enter the fray as we did then. But hang on. The spot price of gas may have moved a little but long-term contracts have hardly budged. Still, the new market share expectations might just scare off one or two of those new entrants and bolster a weak share price...

Crossed wires

IF imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Cable and Wireless must have been delighted by BT's French connection. C&W has been written off by BT among others as an investment trust because it tends to hold minority investments around the world. Now BT has adopted the same formula, with a 25 per cent stake in the French deal and, with the exception of Spain, a minority holding in every new foreign venture. Maybe C&W has it right after all.

Bad weather hits profits at Redland

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

REDLAND, the building materials group, yesterday blamed bad weather for a slump in its profits.

A severe winter had swept across its European operations, "exacerbating already difficult market conditions", Redland said.

The company said that it was to cut 250 jobs in France after trade in aggregates proved worse than expected. Aggregates in France have come under additional pressure as the country reduces public spending on infrastructure projects in order to meet the Maastricht criteria for European Monetary Union.

Redland followed a series of building sector companies in declaring sharp falls in profits when it reported a 42 per cent slide in pre-tax profits, to £95.5 million, for its first half.

The interim dividend, due on December 16, is held at 5.5p.

Redland threw a more optimistic light on its figures than some construction companies by predicting improvement later in the year as a higher level of cost savings kick in.

Redland's European tiling operations took the brunt of a downturn in demand from the tough winter, with operating

profits sliding to £69 million, from £119.4 million. Weather delays to building work worsened already poor demand in Germany and France.

Redland said that it was hopeful of recovery in Germany. There, it is largely exposed to the housing market through its roofing work and it is confident of increased activity in housing. It said that housing permits, an indicator of short-term prospects, rose by 3 per cent in the main market area for pitched roofing.

Redland also expects cost savings of £10 million in its German businesses in the full year. In the UK, low spending on roadbuilding and other infrastructure projects affected aggregates, with profits down to £27.5 million, from £35 million. However, Redland said that improving prices helped to offset a fall in volumes.

In France, where the 250 jobs will be lost, Redland expects annual cost savings of about £6 million from restructuring to come through by 1997.

Savings from restructuring already in train throughout the group are expected to deliver up to £30 million.

Tempus, page 26

AEA Technology in strong market debut

By CLARE STEWART

SHARES of AEA Technology achieved a strong premium on their first day's trading. The shares, offered at 280p, leapt ahead in early trading and closed at 323½p. More than 20 million shares changed hands.

The rise took the company's market value to £258 million from £224 million.

AEA was formerly the research and advisory division

of the state-owned Atomic Energy Authority. About 3,300 of AEA Technology's staff subscribed for shares.

The offer to private investors was seven times oversubscribed. Most received a fifth of the shares applied for.

Shares in Brunner Mond, the commodity chemicals group, made a less successful debut. Offered at 175p, they closed at 170½p after touching 179p.

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Dip in UK oil and gas output

UK OIL and gas production fell to a 12-month low in August, although strengthening oil prices helped to offset the full impact.

The Royal Bank of Scotland's monthly oil and gas index said oil output fell 6.9 per cent in August because of scheduled maintenance work, to 2.3 million barrels per day (bpd), 5.8 per cent lower than in August 1995. However, the average price of Brent crude rose to \$20.51 in August, its second-highest of the year, 4.8 per cent up on July and 27.6 per cent up on August 1995. Daily oil revenues fell 2.2 per cent to £30.9 million, but were nearly 22 per cent higher than a year ago.

Gas production fell for the sixth successive month. Output was down 3.4 per cent on July although 26.9 per cent higher than in August last year. Oil prices rose steeply in September on renewed conflict between Iraq and America with Brent crude at \$23.15 yesterday.

Fyffes plans Europe drive

FYFFES, the fresh-food company based in the Irish Republic which controls one-fifth of the EU banana market, said yesterday it would use the cash from the disposal of a major Central American operation to expand in Europe.

The company sold its 50 per cent stake in Banana Trading Corporation to a Dole Food Company subsidiary for \$26.3 million. The corporation, which owns a Guatemalan banana farming business and farm assets in Honduras, was the main supplier for Fyffes' US operation.

Last year the operation, with only a 2.5 per cent market share, made a loss of about £1 million.

Carl McCann, Fyffes deputy chairman, said: "The cash generated will be used to continue the group's programme of European expansion."

Fyffes has agreed shipping arrangements with Dole, for transporting bananas, which it said would give both companies significant economies of scale.

Ultra aiming to raise £27.4m in market flotation

By FRASER NELSON

ULTRA Electronic Holdings, which makes electrical instruments for aircraft, is seeking a stock market flotation via a share placing that values the company at £162.5 million.

Julian Bloch, chief executive, and Ian Yeoman, finance director, led a management team that bought the company for £40 million three years ago, buying seven businesses from the TI Group. The bid was backed by Philidrew Ventures and a consortium of banks led by the Bank of Scotland.

Mr Bloch said that he had managed to secure the good price from the uncertainty surrounding the defence sector in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the end of the Cold War.

The company will raise

£27.4 million from the flotation, £19.6 million of which will be used to redeem the preference shares and £7.8 million will be put towards a share buyback.

In 1996 it is expected to generate profits of £14.5 million (£10.2 million) before tax and exceptional, on sales of £120 million (£97.3 million).

Three quarters of its sales come from the military sector, and nearly all are from the UK. It plans to increase its modest presence in the US, where it made its first acquisition in July. Its order book is worth £184 million.

Schroders has placed 34.4 million shares with institutions at 250p each. The issue was 2½ times subscribed.

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Ultra hopeful: Julian Bloch, right, and Ian Yeoman after the flotation announcement

Beazer optimistic after strong performance in second half

By OLIVER AUGUST

BEAZER HOMES, the building group, suffered a decline in pre-tax profits — to £46.5 million from £55.7 million — in the year to June 30, in spite of a marked improvement in fortunes in the second half.

Although earnings fell to 11.78p a share, from 13.95p, the company has increased the total dividend to 6p, from 5.85p, with a final payment of 4p. The shares rose 3½p to close at 187p.

Victor Benjamin, chairman, said that the group had achieved one of its highest levels of completions and that house reservations in the current financial year were already up one third on 1995. "In a challenging year the group was able to make major strides in development, broadening its approach to the market," he said.

The group's average selling price for a home rose by 3 per cent in the year, to £63,300, reflecting a minor change to the product mix and a lower level of social housing. Oper-

ating profits recovered to finish 13 per cent lower year-on-year, after dipping by 22 per cent in the first six months.

In a statement on its business outlook, the group said: "Against a backdrop of increasing consumer confidence

current trading is good. But this is an election year and the challenge that the group faces this year will be to maintain its sales momentum against any impact from the pre-election build-up."

It went on: "Beyond the

election, the underlying strength of the market will enable the group's continued progress, driven by its clarity of organisation."

The group's land bank was 20,167 plots by the year end, an increase of almost 2,000, with

an average value of £12,900 per plot. Strategic land holdings were also strengthened, with the group holding 3,300 acres of land without planning status. A further 4,200 acres are held under option agreements, which the group is promoting through a planning system.

Beazer is currently expecting that material suppliers will raise prices in view of the upturn in the construction sector. To keep such cost increases under control the group is including cost inflation within its land acquisition appraisals, which should help to protect margins.

The composition of the board changed during the year, with Andrew Calvert being appointed financial director after David Smith moved to an operational role.

The final dividend will be paid on November 18 to shareholders listed on the register on October 15.

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Oliver Group trips again



Cassidy: market turbulence

DIFFICULT market conditions continued to trip up Oliver Group, the shoe retailer, in its first half (Clare Stewart writes).

Oliver reported an operating loss of £5.01 million, against 1995 losses of £2.3 million, and turnover down by nearly 15 per cent, to £29.4 million.

Denis Cassidy, chairman, said the results reflected flat consumer spending and "turbulence in the market from the collapse of the Pacia group", which included Saxeone and Hush Puppies shoe shops.

Oliver's sale of its former

headquarters site in Leicester-shire helped the balance sheet, netting £13.4 million to give a pre-tax profit of £7.6 million, against a comparable loss of £3.1 million last year, and gearing fell from 104 per cent to 30 per cent. There is again no interim dividend.

Oliver Group has 310 shops under the Oliver's, Timponis and Paris names. It is testing a number of new-style outlets, which, Mr Cassidy says, have shown encouraging results.

A further operating loss is expected in the second half, and the shares fell 3½p, to 32p.

Lufthansa says BA is winning ticket war

By OLIVER AUGUST

BRITISH AIRWAYS is winning the ticket war in Europe through aggressive price-cutting tactics, a rival airline said yesterday.

Lufthansa, the German carrier, said it had seen a sharp drop in market share and profits through being undercut by up to 45 per cent on domestic sales.

Herrn Klein, a Lufthansa marketing executive, told a meeting of travel agents in Berlin: "Traffic is being siphoned off with cheap offers. The German market is being reduced to a connecting function for London, Paris, Amsterdam or Zurich."

In the first half of this year Lufthansa lost 250,000 customers and DM50 million (£22 million) in sales to discount offers in Germany from other European airlines. Herr Klein said. He named BA as an especially tough competitor, along with Air France.

The proposed BA/American Airlines alliance, being considered by the Office of Fair Trading, would heighten the ticket war. Herr Klein expected more competition from a BA telephone office in Bremen that would sell American Airlines tickets.

A BA spokesman said in response: "Lufthansa has a strong link with United Airlines as well as many smaller joint services around the world. Their criticism is not fair."

Higgs & Hill gives warning of loss

By FRASER NELSON

SHARES in Higgs & Hill, the construction and property group, yesterday dropped by 5p to a 12-month low of 76½p after the company gave warning that it would again incur a loss by the year end.

The company, which had been expected to make full-year pre-tax profits of £1.5 million, said that it had already run up pre-tax losses of £1.94 million (£593,000 profit) at the halfway stage. George Duncan, chairman, blamed five loss-making contracts, all due to end by February. Analysts now expect year-end losses to total £2.5 million.

Mr Duncan said that the company had seen signs of recovery in the housing market, and remained confident that this would lift profits in its housing operations. It completed 200 houses in its first half, against 181 last time, but selling prices remained low.

Debt grew from £10.6 million to £15.4 million in the six months to June 30, taking gearing to 21 per cent. Mr Duncan said that borrowings had since returned to £10.6 million through disposal proceeds and settlement of a long dispute with Guy's Hospital. Sales rose from £166 million to £174 million, but a sharp fall in profitability left losses of 3.5p a share (0.7p earnings). An interim dividend held at 1p is due on December 5. The shares closed at 77p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Grampian to buy 75% stake in EWM

GRAMPIAN HOLDINGS is paying £64.4 million for the 75 per cent stake in Edinburgh Woolen Mill it does not already own. It said EWM will form a new retail division to operate alongside its pharmaceutical and transport divisions. The acquisition will be part-funded via a rights issue of one new share for every five held at 125p each, raising £14.8 million.

EWM is a privately-owned company. The Stevenson family holds a 48 per cent interest; directors and employees hold 27 per cent and Grampian the balance. In the year to February 3 pre-tax profits were £8.6 million. Grampian also reported an 11 per cent rise pre-tax to £4.75 million for the six months to June 30. Earnings rose 7 per cent to 4.34p a share and the interim dividend is lifted 8 per cent to 1.95p a share.

Huntleigh sales curb

HUNTLEIGH TECHNOLOGY, the medical products company, said sales were being restrained by current healthcare budgetary pressures in Britain and America, although long-term demand remained strong. In the six months to June 30 the company achieved an 11 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £7.96 million and earnings rose 10 per cent to 18.55p a share. The interim dividend is lifted to 4p a share from 3.5p. The shares fell 25p to 85½p.

Renishaw profits surge

RENISHAW, manufacturer of precision metrology and inspection equipment, enjoyed a 64 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, to £15.9 million from £9.7 million, in the year to June 30. Turnover grew 23 per cent to £77.1 million, with strong growth in Britain, Italy and the Far East. Earnings were 26.26p a share, compared with 16.04p previously, after adjustment for a 1-for-6 capitalisation issue. A final dividend of 5.76p a share makes a total of 8.65p (6.41p). The shares rose 8½p.

Trinity takes a tumble

SHARES of Trinity Holdings, the specialist vehicle manufacturer, fell 50p to 267½p yesterday after the company said it expected little growth in earnings per share this year. The company reported a 7 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £8.1 million for the six months to July 31. But earnings were unchanged at 9.7p a share on an enlarged share capital. The interim dividend rises 8 per cent to 2.8p. Turnover rose 25 per cent to £125.7 million, with strong growth in exports.

Sykes returns to black

ANDREWS SYKES, the air-conditioning, pumps and heating specialist, returned to profit in the half-year to June 30, earning £3.4 million before tax compared with losses of £1.5 million in the previous first half. Earnings were 14.2p a share, compared with losses of 16.6p. There is a dividend of 3.5p a share, the first interim dividend to be paid since 1992. The company said gearing was reduced to 16.6 per cent from 61.5 per cent. The shares were unchanged at 48p.

Hawtal Whiting ahead

HAWTAL WHITING HOLDINGS, the automotive services group, lifted pre-tax profits to £1.8 million from £845,000 in the six months to June 30. Activity was subdued in America, although this was likely to prove short-lived, the company said. Losses at the German subsidiary have been reduced. Earnings of 5.8p a share recovered from 0.8p previously but there is again no interim dividend. The shares were unchanged at 160p.

Expansion for DCC

DCC, the Irish industrial holding company, has expanded its food interests by acquiring 50 per cent of Millais Investments, which, in turn, has acquired Allied Foods, Ireland's leading independent distributor of chilled and frozen foods. The remaining 50 per cent of Millais is held by Allied management. The deal involves DCC realising its 30 per cent shareholding in Allied for Ir£3.8 million and investing Ir£2.75 million in Millais.

Clyde Blowers purchase

CLYDE BLOWERS, supplier of soot-blowing and materials-handling equipment, is acquiring Bergemann Germany and Bergemann USA from Germany's Deutsche Babcock Group for £17.1 million, to be part-funded by a £12 million two-for-three rights issue at 265p. Existing shares rose 11p, to 351p. Clyde estimates that the acquisitions have 28 per cent of the global soot-blowing equipment market. Clyde forecast pre-tax profits of £2.31 million for the year to August 31, up 48 per cent.

Bruntcliffe pegs payout

BRUNTCLIFFE AGGREGATES is holding the interim dividend at 0.4p a share after a fall in pre-tax profits to £601,000 from £860,000 for the six months to June 30. Earnings fell to 0.8p a share from 1p. The company blamed poor weather and difficult markets and said the outlook was mixed, with operations in Scotland accounting for 90 per cent of UK turnover. In America, operations in Pennsylvania were performing well. The shares were unchanged at 22½p.

Harmony loses £5.3m

HARMONY PROPERTY GROUP had losses of £5.3 million before tax in the year to March 31 after a £3.6 million writedown of asset values. There was an exceptional charge of £460,000 against restructuring. Losses were £1.95 million in the previous year. The latest loss per share was 3.31p (1.23p loss). There was again no dividend. Harmony said none of the property portfolio met the board's criteria and there would be disposals. The shares were unchanged at 34p.

Radio group in the red

INDEPENDENT Radio Group, the commercial radio station operator with interests in Scotland, Manchester and Sussex, broadcasts to an adult population of 5.4 million with the acquisition of Central Scotland Radio. The company, which began business after raising £9.7 million by way of a placing in October 1995, yesterday reported a loss of £740,000 before tax for the period from incorporation to June 30. The loss per share was 7.5p. There is no dividend.

Customs opens VAT fraud hotline

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday launched an offensive on VAT fraud in the building trade in an effort to collect £75 million from tax-avoiders in the next two years.

With two fraud hotlines, it is encouraging customers to shop builders who are not VAT-registered. Businesses with a turnover of more than £47,000 are required to register for VAT, which is charged to customers and passed on to Customs and Excise. The crackdown, mounted in conjunction with the construction industry, aims to tackle the widespread cash-in-hand practice where VAT is avoided, and also the practice of some building companies to charge VAT to customers and then not pass it on because they are not registered.

Phillip Oppenheim, the Exchequer Secretary, said: "VAT fraud damages legitimate businesses and damages the image of the industry as a whole. This is why our joint initiative with the construction industry is so important."

Ian Deslandes, Director-General of the Building Employers Confederation, said: "We are aware that construction is a problem area in VAT compliance, and we

are giving the Customs initiative our full support. The integrity of the building industry as a whole is at stake." Brian Flint, a director of the Federation of Master Builders, said his federation "supports any move to minimise the shadow economy".

The scheme, part of a wider initiative by Customs and Excise to tackle the shadow economy, will run for two years in London, Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham, Oxford and Colchester, operated by 50 VAT officers. It is thought the scheme may encourage businesses to shop other businesses since customers escaping VAT may be loath to complain.

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TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
4.30	4.25	Alfred Dunhill	4.25	-0.05	-1.2	10.5
4.30	4.25	Alfred Dunhill	4.25	-0.05	-1.2	10.5

BANKS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
2.70	2.65	ABN-AMRO	2.65	-0.05	-1.9	10.5
2.70	2.65	ABN-AMRO	2.65	-0.05	-1.9	10.5

BREWERS, PUBS & REST

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
3.10	3.05	Beck's	3.05	-0.05	-1.6	10.5
3.10	3.05	Beck's	3.05	-0.05	-1.6	10.5

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ELECTRICITY

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ELECTRONIC & ELECT

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

BUILDING MATERIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ENGINEERING

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

CHEMICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

DISTRIBUTORS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ENGINEERING, VEHICLES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

HEALTHCARE

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

INSURANCE

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years)

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

SHORTS (under 5 years)

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

LEISURE & HOTELS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

MINING

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

OIL & GAS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

OTHER FINANCIAL

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

RETAILERS, FOOD

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

RETAILERS, GENERAL

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

WATER

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

PHARMACEUTICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

PRINTING & PAPER

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

PROPERTY

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

TEXTILES & APPAREL

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

TRANSPORT

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

BRITISH FUNDS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

INDEX-LINKED

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

SUPPORT SERVICES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

UNLISTED

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

WATER

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5
1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

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High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
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High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	P/E
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1.10	1.05	Admiral	1.05	-0.05	-4.8	10.5

ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET

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CHOICE 1

Radio 3's 50th birthday is celebrated with a world premiere
VENUE: Sunday at the Festival Hall

CHOICE 2

First night for Ted Hughes's translation of Blood Wedding
VENUE: Opens tonight at the Young Vic

THE TIMES ARTS

CHOICE 3

Frans Bruggen performs Rameau and Mozart with the SCO
VENUE: Tonight in City Hall, Glasgow

OPERA

Lynne Dawson prepares to put some backbone into Gluck's most submissive heroine

The doormat fights back

OPERA: Lynne Dawson talks to Hilary Finch about portraying Iphigenia for Opera North. Plus, Elektra in The Netherlands

A crowd is gathered for a human sacrifice. It is evening, baying for blood. Hands are raised, bodies strain forward, rolling like a huge wave. Agamemnon enters, holding a knife aloft. And then the wind turns. The anger abates. The rehearsal is over.

The chorus of Opera North is being given an authentically hard time in Leeds. At the 1774 Paris premiere of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis* the composer himself supervised every rehearsal, and was accused of behaving like a sergeant-major in demanding that his chorus should act as well as sing. The soprano Sophie Arnould, whom Gluck had chosen for the title role, found it all too much and stepped down.

More than 120 years later, the British soprano Lynne Dawson has no such intention. And this despite the challenges of re-creating a work written specifically to make eloquent a language in which it is not now being sung, and abounding with dance music for which, for reasons of budget, there are no dancers. Dawson is not new to the work: she was John Eliot Gardiner's Iphigenia in Aix-en-Provence. But that was ten years ago, and performed in French. A linguist — she was once a professional French translator — must surely be frustrated by having to sing the role in English?

"I'm always sad not to be doing an opera in its original language," she says. "But I think it's right here. I've found myself learning some of it back in the French original, though — just to sense the beauty of the lines." And, doubtless, to be hands-on adviser in a new translation which is constantly being remoulded by director and singers.

Gluck's daunting simplicity of style is being taken at face value. Dawson had to erase all the vocal ornaments in her score to achieve the clean, sculpted style for which conductor Valentin Reynold is aiming. As for the dance music, some of which is being cunningly snipped, tailored and sewn in at various points during the opera: "Well, it can sound a bit strange out of context," Dawson says, "but I suppose it's better than having to take a bow at the end of each act."

Dawson has had to do some re-fashioning of the character, too. Iphigenia is pushed around mercilessly: her marriage is arranged; she's deceived into thinking that her fiancé has rejected her; then told the marriage is on after all. She then discovers that her father has arranged to have her sacrificed. And she agrees. Is this ludicrous submission? Noble self-denial? A game for control freaks in which she finally turns the tables?

"We're beginning to move towards watching Iphigenia discover a new strength. By Act III, everyone is having to submit to her will. She rejects all their appeals. I've found this very challenging. It's been a long journey."

Rather, like Dawson's own. As her voice becomes more mature, more full-bodied, and she begins to move from lyric to more dramatic roles, she finds herself turning to Mozart's Countess, Strauss's Octavian, Gluck's Alceste. And, most recently, to Wagner's Elsa with Daniel Barenboim in Berlin. "That's really thrilling," Dawson says. "I don't like to be pigeon-holed, and at last I'm not. But I would like to work more in my own country — if only I were offered the right roles."

• Iphigenia in Aulis opens on Monday at Opera North, Grand Theatre, New Brigste, Leeds



Lynne Dawson (foreground) and Della Jones, who sings Clytemnestra in the new translation of Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, opening on Monday

Trojans clearly not hoarse

Elektra Amsterdam

A post-Trojan-War drama. Until very close to the climax of the opera, Decker's *Elektra* is a broadly "traditional" Chrysothemis (Inge Nielsen) as a starlet-bimbo (the Marilyn Monroe, while Klytemnestra is played and sung by the youthful Anne Gjevjang) as a rasping, painted hag. Gjevjang was effective, but she was no Christa Ludwig.

Contrastingly, Decker has Orestes (Jukka Rasilainen) murder both his mother and

mother's head — is that one blood-soaked tyranny is replaced by another. That was Kupfer's conclusion 15 years ago, but I am not sure it is that of Strauss and his librettist, Hofmannsthal.

The musical performance under the company's music director, Hartmut Haenchen, was distinguished if not earth-shattering. Haenchen — nurturing a cast of lightish voices — gets the Netherlands Philharmonic to play, according to the composer's injunction, transparently, innocently

lyric voices to penetrate, but dramatic punches are inevitably pulled.

Bundschuh makes a good stab at the title role with beautiful, clearly sung high notes, but breathy ones in the middle and lower registers. She is a whirlwind on stage, though, complemented by Nielsen's gloriously free and silver-voiced Chrysothemis: this is Strauss singing in the lyrical Welfisch style, unheard in this opera. I should think, for 40 years or more. We must hear more of this lovely Danish soprano's Strauss in London.

HUGH CANNING

LONDON

BIRTHDAY BASH: On Sunday, at 7.30pm, the BBC Symphony Orchestra marks the 50th anniversary of the Third Programme (now Radio 3). Andrew Davis conducts the debut performance of Colin Matthews's vast work, *Renaissance*, written especially for the occasion, followed by Jost's ebullient *Glorious Mass*. With Eva Urbanova, soprano, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, mezzo-soprano, Denis Gulyaev, tenor, Alexander Aronov, bass, and the BBC Symphony Chorus. Festival Hall, South Bank, SE1 (0171-960 4242). 5pm

BLOOD WEDDING: Alexandra Gluskin and Jasper Britton play the passionate lovers in Lorca's tragedy. Tim Supple directs a new version by Ted Hughes, with "hot desert" music composed by Adam Lee. Young Vic, 66 The Cut, SE1 (0171-928 6363). Opens tonight, 7.30pm. Then Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat. Sat (Oct 26, Nov 2, 3, 2.30pm. Until November 2.

CHAUCER'S TALES: Alternatively, north of the river, Richard Hickox conducts the London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus in Dyon's colorful, large-scale choral work, *The Canterbury Pilgrims*. With Yvonne Kenny, soprano, Philip Langridge, tenor, and Stephen Roberts, baritone. Barbican, St. John's, EC2 (0171-638 8891). Sunday, 7.30pm

ASHES TO ASHES: Pinter world premiere: Lindsay Duncan and Stephen Rea in an hour-long two-hander. Royal Court Upstairs (Ambassadors), West Street, WC2 (0171-730 1745). Tue-Sat, 8pm. mat. Thurs and Sat, 4pm

CASH ON DELIVERY: Comedy performer Bradley Walsh in his first leading West End role. Described as a boy's laugh about benefit fraud, written by Michael Coady and directed by his dad, Ray. Whitehall, Whitehall, SW1 (0171-369 1755). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat, 5.30pm and 8.30pm, mat. Wed, 3pm

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPPT: Paloma Baeza, Paul Jesson and Con O'Neill in Julian Gurner's last-minute play concerned with anti-Semitism and survival in Poland, 1938 to 1946. Hampstead, Swiss Cottage Centre, NW3 (0171-722 3201). Mon-Sat, 8pm, mat. Sat, 3.30pm

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM: Adrian Noble's much-travelled production now recast and in London for five weeks before another tour. Barbican, St. John's, EC2 (0171-638 8891). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Thurs and Sat, 2pm. Until October 5

NEW RELEASES

DON'T FORGET YOU'RE GOING TO DIE: Self-portrait of an artist of an art director who tests HIV-positive. Written and directed by, and starring, Warren Beatty. ICA Cinema (0171-490 3847)

JANE EYRE: (PG) Debut but biopic adaptation of the novel, with Charlotte Gainsbourg and William Hurt. Director, Franco Zeffirelli. Barbican (0171-638 8891). Mat. Wed. 11.30am. Sat. 2.30pm. Sun. 1.30pm

LAST MAN STANDING: (18) Bruce Willis plays two budding gangs against each other. Financed by more money from director Walter Hill. Citylight Picture House (0171-496 3323). Mon-Fri, 8pm, Sat 10pm, Sun 12.30pm

THE SEVEN STREAMS OF THE RIVER: (18) Peter LePage's company, Ex Machina, brings his epic tale of life and death in Jerusalem since 1945. Complete show lasts seven and a half hours (incl. interval). National (Lambeth), South Bank, SE1 (0171-428 2222). Part 1, tonight, Oct 3, 7pm. Part 2, Oct 4, 7.30pm.

CINEMA GUIDE

Geoff Brown's assessment of films in London and where indicated with the symbol (P) on releases across the country

MULTIPLICITY: (12) Michael Keaton clones himself to solve his hectic life. Cross-cast treatment of a bright idea. (P) Arclight Cinema, Director, Harold Ramis. Odeon: Kensington (01426 914688). Lakeside: Weybridge (01426 914688). UCI: Whiteley (01426 914688). Virgin: Chislehurst (01426 914688)

A SUMMER'S TALE: (12) Vacationing student ponders female dreams. Excellent direction from veteran French director Eric Rohmer, with Maud Poullet and Amanda Lang. National (Lambeth), South Bank, SE1 (0171-428 2222). Part 1, tonight, Oct 3, 7pm. Part 2, Oct 4, 7.30pm.

EMMA: (U) Gwyneth Paltrow shines in Jane Austen adaptation that tests too much towards the pretty-party.

ESCAPE FROM LA: (15) Slowly action movie from John Carpenter, set in a Los Angeles of 1950. (P) UCI: Whiteley (01426 914688). Warner: (0171-437 4343)

STRIPTEASE: (15) Demi Moore's stripper seeks custody of her daughter. Curious mixture of sex, satire and melodrama, with Ben Reynolds. ASC: Tottenham Court Road (0171-426 914688). Odeon: Kensington (01426 914688). UCI: Whiteley (01426 914688). Virgin: Chislehurst (01426 914688)

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WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Massey

ELSEWHERE

BIRMINGHAM: A recital by the distinguished Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha includes set of Gluck's evocative *Spanish Dances*. These are complemented by Mendelssohn's concertos. Four Songs without Words and the famous *Concerto* by Schumann. Birmingham Hall, Broad Street (021-434 4523). Tonight, 8pm

GLASGOW: The Scottish Chamber Orchestra is joined by the SCO Chorus for its first concert of the 1996/97 season at the City Hall. Frans Bruggen conducts Bartok's suite, *Les Indes Galantes* and Mozart's vast choral work, *Requiem*. The soloists are Janice Watson, soprano, Stella Donnelly, alto, Jean Paul Fouchecourt, tenor, and Stephen Gadd, bass. City Hall, Candlish (0141-287 5511). Tonight, 7.30pm

LEEDS: The remarkable CamCo Dance Company, whose six members include two wheelchair users, presents the British premiere of A.C. Cross. Your

ROMANCE, ROMANCE: British premiere of the 1988 Broadway musical, by Keith Harniman and Barry Harman, presenting two views of romance. *Company* is a turn-of-the-century Vienna and a modern contrast. Stephen Decker directs. Barbican, St. John's, EC2 (0171-638 8891). Tue-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Sat, 3.30pm

THE SEVEN STREAMS OF THE RIVER: (18) Peter LePage's company, Ex Machina, brings his epic tale of life and death in Jerusalem since 1945. Complete show lasts seven and a half hours (incl. interval). National (Lambeth), South Bank, SE1 (0171-428 2222). Part 1, tonight, Oct 3, 7pm. Part 2, Oct 4, 7.30pm.

UNCLE VANYA: Bill Bryden's stately Cheesecake cost: Frances Barber, Constance Cummings, Trevor Egan, Derek Jacobi, Peggy Mount, Imogen Stubbs, and Richard Johnson in place of Alec McCowen. Albery, St. Martin's Lane, WC2 (0171-369 1730). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 3pm. Until November 16

WOLFE: Dame Peggy and David Suchet in his most famous play. With Clara Horner and Lloyd Owen. Almeida, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-259 4404). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm, mat. Sat, 3pm

LONG RUNNERS: **Don't Dress for Dinner:** Duchess (0171-494 5400). **Green** (0171-369 1730). **Inspector Galt:** Garrick (0171-494 5400). **Inspector Galt:** Garrick (0171-494 5400). **Inspector Galt:** Garrick (0171-494 5400)

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only
Some seats available
Seats at all prices

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ART GALLERIES

PAPRON GALLERY 14 Sept-18 Oct. Bon with a "golden spirit" ARTISTS OF THE MOMENT MEANS 11 Macclesfield St. SW1 0171 236 6144

OPERA & BALLET
COLISEUM 0171 632 8300 (2pm)
ENGLISH NATIONAL (2pm)
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 304 4000 for Box Office & Sunday info. Tickets available on the day

THEATRES
ALBANY THEATRE 0171 369 1730
ALBANY THEATRE 0171 369 1730
ALBANY THEATRE 0171 369 1730

UNCLE VANYA by Anton Chekhov
FRANCES BARBER
CONSTANCE CUMMINGS
TREVOR EGAN
DEREK JACOBI
RICHARD JOHNSON
PEGGY MOUNT
IMOGEN STUBBS
MODEN STUBBS
Directed by Bill Bryden
"A fascinatingly intelligent production"
"The best Chekhov I have seen"
5 Times

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DIAL

POP 1

Sheryl Crow bounces back into the reckoning with a new album of quality songs



POP 2

... while Evan Dando adds a little grit to his mix on the Lemonheads' *Car Button Cloth*

THE TIMES POP ARTS

POP 3

Dated already: revisiting Nirvana is like stepping back into the Stone Age



POP 4

John Mellencamp has something to get off his chest: a deep hatred for a band beginning with O

Solo discoveries as the Crow flies

NEW POP CDs: David Sinclair reports that talented Sheryl needs no outside help to make a great album

SHERYL CROW

Sheryl Crow (A&M 540 592)
AFTER all the mean-spirited criticism Sheryl Crow has had to endure from the various malcontents who collaborated with her on *Tuesday Night Music Club*, it is a pleasure to report that this follow-up is as good as, if not better than, her eight-million-selling debut. Produced and, for the most part, played by Crow herself, it is a collection that fully vindicates her abilities, although it must be said that the sequencing of the tracks does not do her any favours.

Maybe Angels, a sluggish song disguised by a fluff-on-the-needle guitar sound, is not a promising track to open with, and it is not until the fourth number, *Sweet Rosalyn*, with its gently shuffling beat and sweetly arching melody line that the album begins to gather momentum. Crow is not, by inclination, a torchbearer for radical ideas, and those seeking dissonant progressions and wild tales of oral sex will need to go elsewhere (although the lyric to *Love is a Good Thing* has already got the record banned from an American chain store). But she extends her range with *Redemption Song*, a cry of protest with distinct echoes of Bob Dylan's *Masters of War*. "Come leaders, come you men of great/Let us hear you pontificate".

And, on tracks such as *Hard to Make a Stand* and *If It Makes You Happy*, she distils a trad-rock riffing style, redolent of the Rolling Stones and Lou Reed, into quality songs of timeless appeal.

THE LEMONHEADS

Car Button Cloth (Tag Recordings/Atlantic 7567-92726)
HAVING cracked up (and I use the term advisedly) in the wake of 1993's breakthrough album, *Come On Feel the Lemonheads*, Evan Dando returns to the fray older and wiser. Fronting yet another new Lemonheads line-up, he has certainly not abandoned the breezy, pop-grunge style he all but invented, and songs such as *Hospital* and the current single, *If I Could Talk I'd Tell You*, have a superficially jaunty

SINGLE

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

Setting Sun (Freestyle Dust/Virgin CHEM 4)

ALTHOUGH written and sung by Noel Gallagher, *Setting Sun* sounds more like a Prodigy record than anything remotely resembling an Oasis song. Indeed, with its racing rhythm and hammerblow emphasis on the first beat in the bar, it could almost be "Son of *Firestarter*", until Gallagher's strange, dopey vocals start to penetrate from somewhere deep in the swirling mix.

A sinister, compelling and downright noisy experience, *Setting Sun* is a genuine monster on its way to No 1.

air. The lyrics are another matter. "I'm past bleeding/It's not the tracks it's where they're leading," he sings on *Tenderfoot*, a far grittier song written by Tom Morgan and Adam Young that recalls the epic sweep of favourites such as *Lil Seed* and *(The) Door*.

The punk-country sound of *Knarville Girl* and *Outdoor Type* adds another dimension again, but at the spiritual heart of this album are a string of appealingly tough but soulful numbers — *Break Me*, *Losing Your Mind* and *One More Time* — that reveal a new strength of purpose in the music of this wayward talent.

NIRVANA

From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah (Geffen)

FOLLOWING on from 1994's MTV *Unplugged in New York* album, this adds another "live" postscript to the sorry tale of the greatest American band of the 1990s. But whereas the *Unplugged* session pointed a potential way forward for Nirvana, this LP, recorded at shows between 1989 and 1994, is very much a throwback to the way things used to be.

Attitudes have changed so much since then, not least, one suspects, as an unconscious reaction to the squalid manner of Kurt Cobain's death. So, although white-knuckle versions of songs such as *Lithium*, *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and *Like a Virgin* are an accurate document of their era, the coarseness of the production and the sheer weight of tortured aggression already sound surprisingly dated.

JOHN PARISH

Dance Hall at Louse Point (Island 524 278)

THE little-known guitarist John Parish and the much-celebrated Polly Jean Harvey have conspired to make an album that is easy to admire if rather harder to love. Parish supplies moody, stumbling, blues-derived backdrops for Harvey to decorate with her Gothic vocal scrawl. Beginning with a distraught murmur on *Rope Bridge Crossing*, she quickly builds up to a jarring peak of dementia on *City of No Sun*, in which she injects a note of sheer terror into her voice, while keeping it perfectly modulated.

TOP TEN ALBUMS

- 1 *Kula Shaker* (Columbia)
- 2 *Travelling Without Moving* (Jarrinco/Sony 52)
- 3 *The Score* (Fugees (Columbia))
- 4 *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* (R.E.M. (Warners Bros))
- 5 *Jagged Little Pill* (Alanis Morissette (Maverick))
- 6 *Spiders* (Spaak (Gut))
- 7 *Older* (George Michael (Virgin))
- 8 *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* (Oasis (Creation))
- 9 *Moseley Shoals* (Ocean Colour Scene (MCA))
- 10 *Ocean Drive* (Lighthouse Family (Wild Card))

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Sheryl Crow rises above the backbiting after her first album to produce an excellent eponymous follow-up

Robust delicacy

BECK/SULZMANN/LAURENCE/CLARVIS
Once is Never Enough (FMR Records CD25-ED496)
THE talents of pianist Gordon Beck and saxophonist/flautist Stan Sulzmann are cruelly undersung. So this CD, on which they front a rhythm section composed of bassist Chris Laurence and drummer Paul Clarvis, is particularly welcome. Beck specialises in a virtuosic brand of robust lyricism, his solos packed with musical ideas and delivered with a delicacy which remains uncompromised even when he is at his most vigorous. Sulzmann has an emotive,

JAZZ ALBUMS

warm sound on tenor; on flute he displays a strength not usually associated with the instrument. Both men, therefore, given these improvisational strengths, require supple propulsion from a bassist, and this they receive in generous quantities from Laurence. Clarvis, however, concentrates a little too much on pretty percussive effects to be entirely the subtle powerhouse needed by either the driving or sweetly joyous themes in which the album abounds. Warmly recommended nevertheless.

JOE ZAWINUL

My People (Escapade Music ESC 03651-2)
ALTHOUGH he's always been open to a plethora of international influences, Joe Zawinul takes eclecticism into downright pan-culturalism on this consistently uplifting, vibrantly rich album. The Vienna-born keyboard player has surrounded himself with a host of singers from Mali (Salif Keita), Turkey (Burhan Ocal), Cameroon (Richard Bona), Venezuela (Thania Sanchez), and Siberia (throat singer Bolot). The resulting album triumphantly coheres, courtesy of Zawinul's unwavering musical aim: to return to the source of music (the human voice in all its variety) and combine it with state-of-the-art electronics and the improvisatory spirit of jazz, to produce that rarest of articles, genuine world music.

CHRIS PARKER

Wisdom of an American fool

David Sinclair finds that John Mellencamp does not share our 'haircut mentality'

John Mellencamp has a message for Oasis: "Get lost. People aren't going to pay money in America to see a band that gets up there and cusses them. They might be big over here but people in America don't know what's popular in England. They don't care. You guys sent us *A Flock Of Seagulls*, remember? Oasis — it's the same thing."

In Britain, of course, the response to this outburst is likely to be "John who?". For if Oasis have sold a "mere" three million records in America, then that is nearly three million more than Mellencamp has sold in Britain.

"So what, I've sold 40 million albums. Who cares? When they've sold 40 or 50 million albums, then you can say Oasis is something."

A rare and reluctant visitor to these shores, where he is still best remembered for the songs *Jack and Diane*, a minor hit in 1982, he is nevertheless a superstar in America. His 1982 album, *American Fool*, struck a huge emotional chord, with its storybook lyrics about ordinary, small-town folk set to brilliantly crafted bites of anthemic rock'n'roll. A string of massive-selling albums ensued — *Uh-Huh* (1983), *Scarecrow* (1985) and *The Lonesome Jubilee* (1987) — records which helped to shape the course of mainstream American rock, while retaining a sense of homegrown individuality. But Mellencamp's music has always been too firmly rooted in the soil of his own culture to travel easily. His disdainful attitude to playing over here



Country boy: John Mellencamp prides himself on being true to his small-town roots

"Britain is so fashion-oriented. A band will be huge here one week; the next week they're gone. I've got nothing to do with the haircut mentality you've got over here."

Mellencamp has long pinned his colours to the mast of old-fashioned musician-ship and the work ethic. Appearing at a media showcase at Dingwalls in North London earlier this month, he floored an invited audience with a set of new songs and greatest hits performed with undeviating conviction and irresistible momentum.

The visit was to mark the launch of his new album, *Mr Happy Go Lucky*, already a Top Ten hit in America, where it is shaping up to be his

most successful since the glory days of the 1980s. Part of the excitement is due to the involvement of the New York club DJ, Junior Vasquez, who, as well as co-producing the album, is credited with "loops, grooves, percussion and other monkey business".

"I told the guys that I wanted to take the blues of the 1940s and combine them with the rhythms of the 1990s. To me that means Robert Johnson on the one hand and Tupac Shakur on the other."

Needless to say, it still sounds overwhelmingly like a John Mellencamp album, but there is no doubt that by discreetly harnessing some of the sounds and rhythmic ingenuity of hip-hop, he has injected new urban credibility into a rock'n'roll formula that is

steeped in the traditions of rural America.

Born in Seymour, Indiana on October 7, 1951, Mellencamp lives less than an hour away in a similarly small town called Bloomington. He takes pride in belonging to a rural community, describing himself and the band as "a bunch of hillbillies from Indiana".

He speaks longingly of his desire to ease up and just spend his days hanging out. In reality, he is far too highly strung for such an existence, although he has had to take better care of himself since suffering a mild heart attack two years ago.

"I thought I was invulnerable, but I'm 44 and I've learnt from my mistakes. The goal is to keep going for 25 years; it isn't to be big for a moment and then disappear. You tell that to Oasis. Pride is a terrible enemy to a young man."

Mr Happy Go Lucky is released on Mercury on October 7.

Caitlin Moran on Baby Bird, the band that tries to leave nothing to chance

Pop stars can usually be divided into two categories: the planners and the dreamers. The dreamers are those people with a 24-carat seam of good luck running through their bones. Everything is a happy accident: it is they who are "discovered" while singing absently at the bus stop; who bump into superstars who take a shine to them and guest on their debut album.

The planner is so sure of his talent that he leaves nothing to chance; every detail is carefully worked out. The planner will find out the date of the president of GMI's daughter's birthday, and play a gig on a hired flat-bed truck outside her house. The planner will read and understand his contract, and will want to oversee every part of his career, making every poster, record-sleeve and gig a perfect distillation of his vision.

Enter Steve Jones of Baby Bird. "I started off as an actor, kind of. We'd interact with the audience — we hated the way performers pretend that there's no one there. But I started to starve, and decided to change careers. I'd been recording songs for ages, on a four-track, and I sent out demos to every record company in Britain. No one responded; they thought it was outrageous that I'd sent in four-track demos, they wanted proper, professionally produced product."

"They also wanted a band. So I went out and got a band. Then I set up my own record company, Baby Bird Recordings, and started to release some albums."

Almost wilfully diverse, each album contains a miniature symphony, a smattering of ballads, several vivid bursts of garage-like pop, and at least three songs that are exercises in simply Being Baby Bird. At their core is a real sweetness — everything seems to be approached with an almost childlike clarity.

The albums led to a feeding frenzy among the big record companies. "I was in the amusing position of being 'courted' by people who'd

Greatness lurks in the wings

previously sent me curt refusals," Jones says. "The four-track demos I'd sent them were the four-track demos I was releasing as albums. I did all the art-work myself."

Baby Bird's artwork is, indeed, a work of art. The sleeve for *Fatherhood* has Jones, pictured naked from

the hips up, sticking out his delightful beer-belly and looking contentedly pregnant. ("Some of the record companies I talked to wanted to send us to a health-farm to lose weight.") The cover of *Bad Shave* shows Steve's gruesomely lacerated face as he attempts to shave with a

cheap disposable razor. "The blood and gore was flour, water and red food colouring. It clings to your hair. I had little red bread eyebrows for two days afterwards."

So Steve, I say confidently, you are one of pop's planners. "Everyone thinks that," he smiles. "But we never planned a thing. I just wake up in the morning with an idea, and try and do something about it by the end of the week."

● The single, *You're Gorgeous*, is released on Monday on Echo Records. The album, *Ugly Beautiful*, is out on Oct 25

Chris Isaak

Baja Sessions



The new album. Out now. Includes "Only The Lonely".



THEATRE

At the Almeida the superb Diana Rigg triumphs in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*



MUSIC 1

Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos coaxes the Philharmonia through a night in the gardens of Spain

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 2

... while a German boys' choir and British orchestra mix happily under Robert King



TOMORROW

The outer-space beauties revealed by the Hubble telescope go on show in a London gallery

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale is bruised by an outstanding revival. Plus, a new and weighty comedy

Another fine marital mess

Diana Rigg once said that what she most admired in a performer was courage, "guts", and the older and more eminent she becomes, the more she displays those qualities herself. She might be spending her maturity effortlessly exuding the sweetness and light, wit and fun she possesses in abundance. Instead, we find her ransacking the theatrical bestiary for tough, challenging roles: a feral Medea, a rasping Mother Courage, and now, with notable success, a character variously described as loud, vulgar, "a slashing, braying residue", and a "satanic bitch".

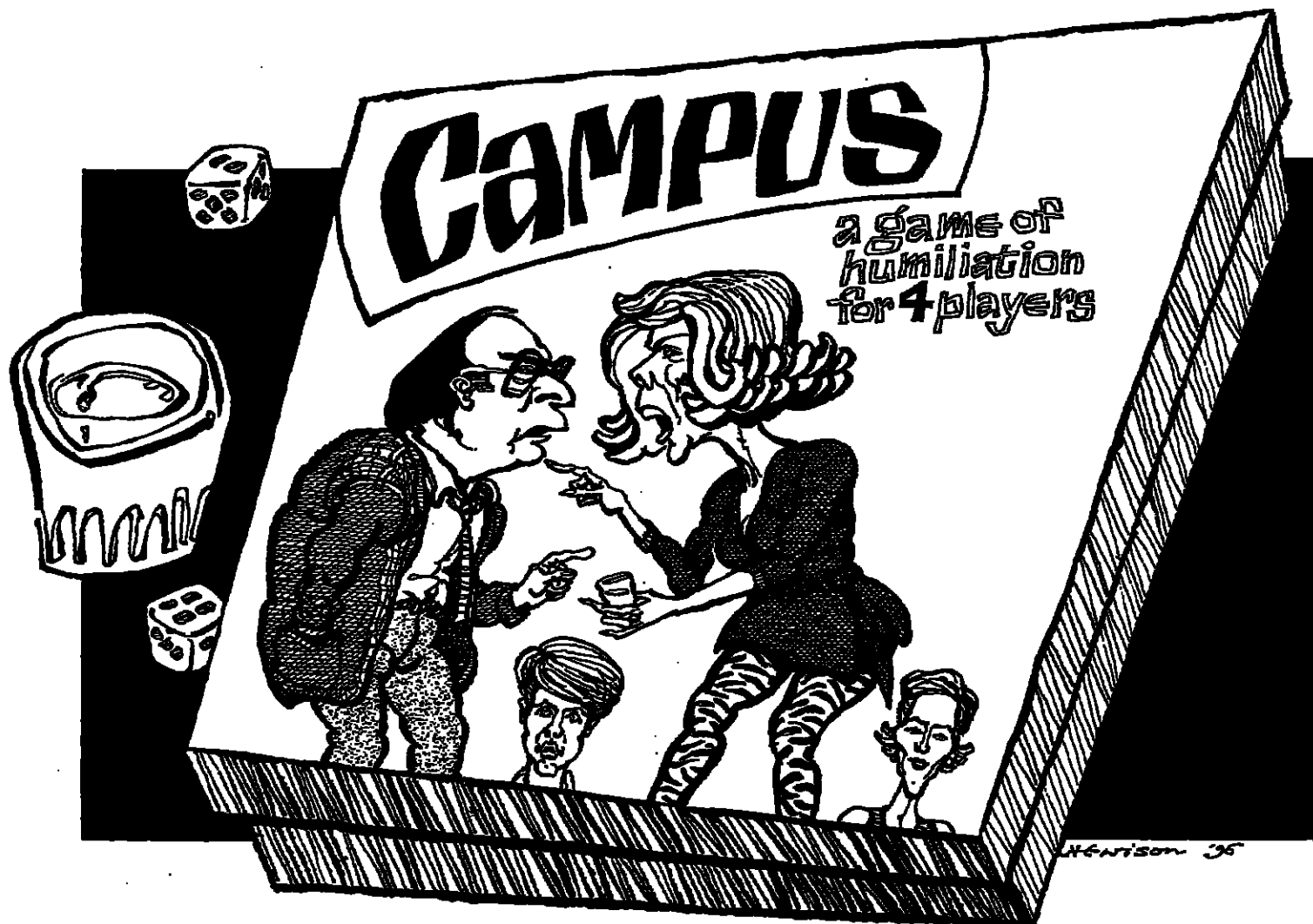
Her Martha is one half of the marital mess at the epicentre of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and David Suchet's George is the other. He is a history professor at a small New England college, she the univer-

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Almeida

sity president's daughter. She mocks him for his failure as a man and an academic; he has her placed as a boozey, sexually rapacious monster. They drink, fence, banter, drink a lot more, play malicious games, exchange poisoned darts, humiliate each other, and flaunt their destructive symbiosis to their late-night guests, a go-getting biologist called Nick and his dim, simpering but inwardly turbulent wife, Honey.

It is George and Martha's exhibitionism that gives the play such plot as it possesses. With alcohol come revelations, and with revelations comes the demolition of life-lies. Lloyd Owen's smug, loveless Nick confides to George that he only married Honey because she had a phantom pregnancy, and George promptly devastates Clare Holman's already shaky Honey by making fun of it. But his main target is, of course, the rampaging Martha. He exposes her consoling fantasy and sustaining myth — that they have a 21-year-old son — as by vindictively declaring the boy dead in a car crash.



War of words: David Suchet (George) and Diana Rigg (Martha) slug it out, watched by Lloyd Owen (Nick) and Clare Holman (Honey)

Overwrought, melodramatic stuff? Not as Howard Davies's careful yet intense (and AT&T-sponsored) production presents it. Ugly and disturbing, then? Yes; but the challenge that both main actors face is unsentimentally to suggest that behind the Strindbergian venom and sado-masochistic mania is a confused love. There are moments when you see the pain in Suchet's superficially suave and ironic George. You certainly see the vulnerability and the

thwarted yearnings masked by the sensuality, brutality and ferocious gleam that add up to Rigg's Martha.

Has the play dated since its premiere in 1962? Well, Martha's tacit assumption that she can and should live through a successful husband is of its period. But the quarrel between George's embattled humanism and the hard-nosed commitment to eugenics he rightly or wrongly attributes to Nick crosses the decades. And beneath the surface

Albee is surely saying something cryptic, hostile and (sadly) still topical about America itself. Note that the main characters are called after the nation's first president and his wife. Crude Martha, helpless George, infantile Honey and crass Nick: the Albee who two years earlier had written that scathing satire, *The American Dream*, used *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to spoof America.

But in the theatre all this comes across as an incidental sideswipe.

The play is always more personal than political. What gives *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* lasting appeal is its portrayal of the sad, stricken, raddled, angry couple so memorably played by Rigg and Suchet. Forty years ago the critic Kenneth Tynan declared that, brilliant and funny though the piece was, it left the heart "unbruised and unmoved". At the Almeida the opposite is true. It moves and it bruises.

● This review appeared in yesterday's *later editions*

Fat issues in a thin plot

FAT is a forbidden word at the Slim for Life dieting club. It has bad connotations, decrees Siobhan, the bossy, falsely peppy group leader in Vanessa Brooks's intelligently critical but unsatisfying new comedy about women and weight.

Siobhan (supertrim, superconfident, superaggravating Jenny Funnell) tells her ladies they need to build up their self-confidence even as they congregate every week to climb humiliatingly on the scales and confess if they have succumbed to the temptation of sweets. The Slim for Life regime, says Siobhan, requires total commitment, discipline and sacrifice, otherwise you will never change your life and become that heavenly svelte New You. Siobhan did it. She used to weigh 16 stone. Now she is completely in control, feels terrific, has a job she really believes in, a flash car and an ideal man. Or so she says.

Brooks does take on interesting issues. This all-female even-handed (a reaction to the recent spate of boys' plays) touches on eating disorders as Kelly (Constance Barrie), chronically timid and clearly worshipping Siobhan's every word, quietly starves herself down to skin and bone and has to be hospitalised.

Siobhan's character also serves to expose the hypocrisy in those who, paradoxically, instruct women about how they should be more self-determining. While proffering assertiveness training, Siobhan becomes increasingly overbearing, possessively insisting her ladies ignore the patriarchal objections of their husbands or male friends and keep

coming to class whatever the cost (and it costs them dear). Brooks demonstrates shifting social dynamics as the group bond among themselves, begin to bridge and have some fun as they get sick of Siobhan's wretched weight-watching. They eventually turn the tables on her, bullying her into confessing her faults. Setting the meetings in a church hall, Brooks indicates that her women are attending a form of full-grown Sunday School, taking Slim for Life's creed as gospel. Siobhan is in fact an idolised, cash-grabbing cult leader, preach-

Love Me Slender

Stephen Joseph, Scarborough

ing virtuousness yet inflicting harm. The pursuit of the perfect body is a suspect new religion.

Unfortunately, these points are rammed home far too heavily. While Brooks satirises Siobhan's childish step-by-step diet plan, the play's own skeletal plot is equally unsophisticated. Brooks demonstrates a strong awareness of dramatic structure, but her characters never become quite three dimensional. Still, Irene Sutcliffe's Celia, even if sentimental, is an amusingly eccentric, wise old bird from the green-welly brigade. Sue Cleaver's gargantuan Claudette is also a wheeze, swishing in like a striptease artist in a mac, giving us a flash of her shockingly garish new frock.

KATE BASSETT

LONDON CONCERTS: Latin fire, an enduring quartet and superb singing

Spanish seductions

IN WHAT could have been a low-key opening to its season, the Philharmonia Orchestra marshalled two of the most distinguished Spanish musicians of our time to transform a cheesy old programme into something memorable. Each warhorse in Tuesday's concert at the Festival Hall sounded newly inspiring under Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, who put on a fine display of old-fashioned, charismatic conducting.

He was joined in Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* by the pianist Alicia de Larrocha. Her crisp playing had great tonal imagination,

and she sought out all of the piece's characteristically earthy colours. She was bright and fiery in the piano's opening statements, and played with improvisatory freedom in the gypsy dances.

Frühbeck de Burgos's account of two suites from *The Three Cornered Hat* had a similar idiomatic rightness. In its sequence of vibrant dances he brought the comedy to vivid life. He persuaded the orchestra to bend the rhythms seductively in the *Seguidilla*, and roused it to a thumping climax in the *Jota*.

This pair of works by Falla contrasted well with two of

Ravel's Spanish-inspired pieces. Both were originally conceived for the piano: in *Pavane pour une infante défunte* the conductor coaxed warm string playing, and conjured up the grotesquerie and colourful effects of the *Alborada del gracioso*. Another link between Falla and Ravel, Diaghilev, made Stravinsky's *Firebird* suite (1919) version an apt piece to complete the programme. Conducting from memory, Frühbeck de Burgos shaped a detailed performance full of primitivism and poise.

JOHN ALLISON

Garland of years

FEW quartets can boast of maintaining the same personnel for more than three decades. But the Guarneri celebrated its thirtieth anniversary two seasons ago and all four founder members are still at their desks.

Even after all this time the quartet is still experimenting: in its QEH recital on Monday night the programme sandwiched Fauré's String Quartet Op 121 between an early and a middle-period Beethoven quartet, Op 18 No 6 in B Flat and Op 59 No 2 in E Minor. It was an intriguing and revealing juxtaposition, for the Fauré — his last work — is in many ways a polar opposite to the Beethoven quartets. Eschewing demonstrative gestures, each of its three movements proceeds in an uninterrupted lyrical flow.

Years of ensemble playing have allowed the Guarneri to pare down its rhetoric to a minimum, but more assiduous shaping of phrases might have countered the impression of amorphous structures.

No such problems occurred in the Beethoven quartets. Here there was an unerring sense of what was important. In the earlier piece, dynamic contrasts were not overplayed, but offset sforzandos were used to push the music along. In the first movement of the "Razumovsky" Quartet, the hazardous pick-ups between instruments were adroitly negotiated, while the E major Adagio would surely have satisfied the composer's wish to it to be played "with much feeling".

NOEL GOODWIN

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EDUCATION

Who survives under Labour?

As the Headmasters' Conference prepares to meet, John O'Leary examines the fears of independent schools

You would never guess it from the agenda for the biggest independent education conference of the year, which starts next Tuesday, that a potentially threatening change of Government may be only a few months away. Academic standards, the sixth-form curriculum and even drugs are down for discussion, but no mention of the general election.

Leaders of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) say that their line is sufficiently clear not to require further debate at this stage, but the corridors and bars at the conference in Glasgow will be alive with speculation about future Government policy. The suspicion must be that a decision has been taken not to rock the boat.

Despite concerns about assisted places, the independent sector has been getting on with new Labour better than expected. Threats of VAT on school fees were soon stifled, and Opposition spokesmen with an antipathy to private education seem to have taken a vow of silence.

Vivian Anthony, the Secretary of HMC, says: "We have been working hard to establish good relations with both the main Opposition parties, with, I think, some success. There is one issue on which we will have to fight like mad, but in other areas we can go along with what has so far been proposed."

The one issue, inevitably, is the fate of the assisted-places scheme. Most independent school heads accept that there is little chance of saving the scheme if Labour wins power, but the sector will renew its campaign in the months ahead. Some pin their hopes on the three-year notice period required under the existing contracts to remove assisted places. But Mr Anthony and others recognise that primary legislation could override this.

There seems no room for compromise. Labour has shifted its ground on all manner of education policies, but not only has the commitment to abolish assisted places been unswerving: the no-

tional saving has already been allocated elsewhere. Indeed, the £100 million cost of the scheme, earmarked for transfer to state primary schools, still represents the only firm guarantee of new money for education in the early years of a Labour administration.

Peter Kilfoyle, the Shadow Education Minister, left the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) in no doubt that the debate on assisted places was over. But he reminded his audience that another key issue for the sector, that of charitable status, was still on the table.

Many of the prep school heads were pleasantly surprised, nevertheless, by Mr Kilfoyle's speech, in

in fees just as many were absorbing the loss of assisted places. For the sector as a whole, it would almost certainly mean a protracted and expensive legal battle through the European courts.

More likely than a blanket removal is a requirement for schools to justify their charitable status individually. Mr Kilfoyle told the IAPS: "If, for example, there is a wealthy school designated a charitable institution because hundreds of years ago it was set up with a charitable purpose but it no longer operates as such, it seems to me that there is not a sustainable position for it when there are so many deserving causes."

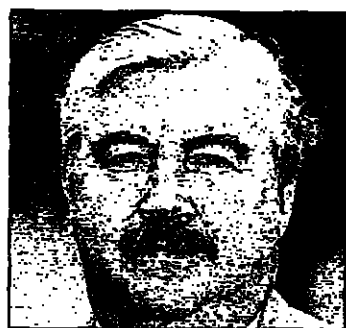
Some of the ancient foundations, such as Winchester and Eton, would be obvious targets for such a review. But, with about a quarter of pupils attending on subsidised places, they would be confident of a clean bill of health.

Labour's interest is more in persuading independent schools to share their facilities with local state schools and community groups. Such arrangements have become common in recent years, although most heads would admit that there is scope for more.

One good example of the sort of collaboration that will appeal to Labour takes place tomorrow at Rose Hill School, a prep school in Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Pupils from 40 neighbouring schools, both state and independent, have been invited to an junior version of the televised Paralympics.

Professor Peter Day, the Director of the Royal Institution, will give the first in a series of science lectures aimed at pupils between the ages of 12 and 14. His opening offering will recreate some of the experiments of Michael Faraday and Sir Humphry Davy, who have strong connections with the area.

Julian Parker, Rose Hill's headmaster, says: "We will do anything we can to bring state and independent schools closer together. We already have a close relationship with some of the grammar schools in the area, and we hope this will spread the net more widely."



Kilfoyle: reassuring

which he predicted that the distinctions between state and independent education would become increasingly blurred. He stuck to the new Labour line that independent schools had an important role to play in a partnership with the state sector.

Particularly in specialist areas such as music, sport and special needs, Labour sees the private sector filling the gaps in state provision. The official policy also clears the way for wider-ranging partnerships with local authorities, although it is hard to imagine many Labour councils taking advantage of the offer.

Charitable status, however, remains the great concern lurking in the background. Its removal would cost schools more than £40 million and could lead to an 8 per cent rise



Gordonstoun: under the television camera lenses, the pupils seemed to develop new skills that may help them in adulthood

In the eye of the critical lens

Mark Pyper, Gordonstoun's headmaster, on the fly-on-the-wall film of his school

Was it an act of courage or one of folly? The reference is not to Napoleon's decision to march on Moscow but to the policy of an independent school allowing television cameras to cross its threshold.

True Stories: Gordonstoun, the two-hour full-length documentary on Channel 4 in July, did at least provide a little holiday digression, fuelling the fires of Common Room and dinner party debate.

More even than the cricket results, early jitters about the league tables and the cost of the school track suit. It was open season and battle was enthusiastically joined.

What was it like at the time? We are a year on from the television focus and in the middle of an HMI inspection. The atmosphere is less strained and important aspects of education are scrutinised openly and sympathetically — a marked change from the intrusive camera being thrust in the direction of unsuspecting mortals whatever their line of business.

We never allowed the hunted feeling to get the better of us, and even if we reached the state of scanning our most private rooms for hidden devices, we remembered that the world into which our young are moving is thickly

populated with paparazzi and perhaps preparation for this is a life skill with which we should equip them. They — the young rather than the paparazzi — came across in a most reassuring way, with a strong, relaxed confidence.

Some of our pupils were able to transfer their acting talents from the life-and-death situation of the stage to the small screen with comfortable deftness. Many who had recently been involved in a school production of *Macbeth* showed themselves and their wares with rare aplomb.

The camera team filmed — one cannot be quite sure why — hundreds of hours of many pupils following a challenging and inclusive curriculum. The director was apparently enthusiastic about the balance of a strong academic programme and Gordonstoun's philosophy of overall personal development. Meanwhile, a few of the young were tempted to assist the TV crew in a search for items of tabloid interest. Initiative and resourcefulness are

important qualities to develop at school and, with the cameras in their midst, some energetic students were able to take these skills forward to first-class degree standard without difficulty. The television folk could also be useful in terms of providing information.

Was it all successful and worthwhile? The answer is that there must be a specific objective for opening doors to television cameras and a risk assessment carried out in advance. Gordonstoun was keen to divest itself of an image and a reputation — ill-founded and inaccurate — that its environment was both "spartan" and socially exclusive. We calculated that, even if the film-makers did their best — or worst — to sensationalise in a very selective way, myths would be dispelled and some of the school's strengths would shine through.

Three months later, success becomes more measurable. A big step in removing folklore has indeed been taken, while the film's undue dwelling on some superficial juvenile behaviour has not

influenced mature and perceptive viewers. As one headmaster colleague said to me, "If that's all they could find in your school after 15 weeks, your pupils must be saints".

While the film did not, as expected, do our promotional work for us, investigate our philosophy or analyse our practices, it did not on the other hand attack the core of our ethos, and the lasting impression seems to be one of normal, spirited youngsters receiving a very sound education with a range of unusual and exciting experiences.

Recruitment was not a primary objective in letting in the cameras. We have a full school, but interest in Gordonstoun has been stirred; we have put ourselves on a different plane for the next stage of our development. Inquiries about the school from prospective parents have increased. Honesty and boldness with a reasonable measure of confidence invariably win through in the end.

So back to the inspectorate. We are awash with performance indicators and up to the gunnels with quality assurance but quietly suspect that what they will really want to discuss will be "the film". The search for truth continues.

Iola Smith describes a venture to introduce teenagers to opera

AUDIENCE at the Welsh National Opera's new production of *Carmen* may be surprised to find teenage singers serenading them in the foyer. They are part of an educational venture to bring opera to the young.

Youth Opera will involve weekly singing and drama classes, workshops and public performances, giving the youngsters an insight into the work of the WNO. The company has embarked on one-off community-based ventures, such as a Valleys version of *The Magic Flute*, but this will produce a closer, long-term relationship. Rob-

Trilling them softly

in Tebbutt. Youth Opera's director, "The company will stage a new version of *Carmen* in the spring."

The Youth Opera experience will not be limited to performance. Each student will be rewarded with a like-minded WNO member so that youngsters fully experience the professional world of opera production.

Such grounding in staging an opera is invaluable for A-level students of music or drama. The WNO, however, is adamant that Youth Opera is not a talent-spotting stage school. Mr Tebbutt says: "There is no audition because we are looking for interested individuals."

After this term's first venture in Cardiff, the company

plans to launch Youth Opera groups in Swansea, Bristol and Birmingham. These will be followed in the spring by classes in Southampton, Liverpool and Oxford so that every city on the WNO's touring itinerary will have its own Youth Opera. Each group will be led by its own music and drama director.

A major new work will have been composed by 1998 when the WNO intends to bring all the Youth Opera groups together to stage a new opera nationwide.

Readers interested in joining Youth Opera should contact its hotline: 01222 492266.

Glenys Kinnock on how we can help our youngsters in the new Europe

'We must close the Euro gap'

There is little doubt that British pupils are no less intelligent than others in the European Union. Nor is there any doubt that the commitment of our teachers is high. Yet on international comparisons, our performance is inadequate.

We spend comparatively less on education, teach our children in larger classes, encourage far fewer of them into education beyond statutory limits or into work-related training and our examination results do not measure up.

New technologies and changing market places require a corresponding change in our workforces, with new skills and new approaches to training and a work.

Education is the key to successful participation in this changing world. We can be proud of many aspects of our education system — but it is clear that we should also learn from others.

Is the British education system equipping our citizens to make progress on an equal footing with others? Sadly, the answer is that it is not.

The evidence of Britain's failings has trickled out slowly. Until today, the publication of my report, *Could Do Better*, this evidence — from the OECD, the EU, and other bodies — has never been brought together in a single publication. But that evidence must be seen as a whole. Now

clear we are letting down this nation and jeopardising its future, and that future lies in being part of the EU.

Yet only a tiny proportion of our students, 0.7 per cent, study abroad — the lowest proportion in the Union. Programmes established by the EU to promote language learning and student mobility have not been regarded with

fervour by the British Government. Indeed, education in the UK gives little recognition to the European dimension. Little notice has been taken of the national curriculum's failure to cover the European Union. Though the UK is party to the Resolution of the European Dimension in Education, the national curriculum gives only a passing reference to the EU, under geography. Support is available for developing education and training from Europe's social fund, but the latest information shows the Government has underspent its allocation by more than £150 million — a waste.

When our education and

training provision is compared with that of our European partners, the UK is too often the poor relation. The quality of our education is now rated 35th in the world by the World Economic Forum. Britain has fewer people aged 16 and 17 in full-time education than any other OECD country except Turkey.

Class sizes are relatively

high and worsening. Many governments of fellow EU member states are recognising and working on this problem. The British Government is ignoring advice, ignoring parents' wishes and scrapping national standards on minimum space for each child, thereby increasing the threat of overcrowding.

Recognised academic studies consistently show that 13-year-olds in the UK are behind many of their European counterparts by up to two years. It is no surprise, then, that at 18-plus, many of our young people are still behind. In 1994, level 3 qualifications were achieved by 41.5 per cent

of 21-year-olds in the UK compared with an equivalent 55 per cent in France and 70 per cent in Germany.

The gaps are not filled later through continued education and training. An international survey in 1993-4 showed only 12 per cent of 25 to 34 year-olds in the UK participating in job-related and continued training, against 43 per cent in France and 33 per cent in Germany. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that most of our youngsters are not getting education provision at the standards common among our European partners.

Clearly, the social problems that we must address in the UK are not unique to this country. It makes sense, therefore, to participate alongside our partners in the search for solutions and to use the resources they employ if we are not to fall further behind and our children be sidelined in the Europe of the future.

The students and workers of Europe plainly do not possess some magical quality that our people cannot hope to find. It is the standards of provision, the breadth and, above all, the accessibility of their educational systems which allows many of them to surge ahead of our young people in skill, achievements and opportunities.

The raw material needed to close these gaps is already in our schools and colleges and in our workforce. The potential must be realised.



POSTS

ROEDEAN



APPOINTMENT OF HEAD

The Council of Roedean invite applications for the position of Head which falls vacant in September 1997 on the retirement of Mrs. Ann Longley after a 13 year Headship of great distinction.

Those interested should write in confidence by 11th October enclosing a curriculum vitae and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of three referees to The Clerk to Roedean School, 190 Strand, London WC2R 1JN, Fax No: 0171-379 6854, E-mail: roedean@lawgram.co.uk



Wolverhampton Girls' High School, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 0BY. Tel: (01902) 812186.

HEAD

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Details of the post may be obtained from the Clerk to the Governors at the school at the above address. The closing date for receipt of applications is 16th October 1996.

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Closing date for applications 12 October 1996. The University welcomes applications from suitably qualified people regardless of race, religion, gender or disability.



For further details and an application form, please contact the Departmental Assistant, School of Hotel, Catering & Tourism Studies, Westminster College, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PD 0171-828 1222

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Further details of the post can be obtained from
N.D.S. Peterson, W.S. Robson McLean WS
28 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh EH3 6GF
Closing date for applications
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To request an application form and further particulars, ring 0171 594 9008 or write to Mr H. Jones, Operations Manager, Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, Silwood Park, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7QJ.

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POSTS

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They should be numerate and comfortable in dealing with management accounting but do not need to have accountancy qualifications. They should have good general management experience. No previous experience of management within an academic institution is necessary.

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Written tests for those wishing to enter as boarders or day pupils will
take place at Westminster on Saturday 2nd November 1996. Final
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An Open Day for those wishing to visit the School will be held on
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Full details may be obtained from the Registrar, Westminster School,
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David Cooper, Senior Personnel Officer, Gyosai
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FOOTBALL

Scotland reward McAllister's steady progress

By Kevin McCarron

SCOTLAND squads have occasionally been accused of producing sterile play, but no one should ever underestimate the fertile thinking required to assemble them. Craig Brown, the national team's manager, announced his party yesterday for the World Cup qualifiers against Latvia and Estonia and managed to introduce some freshness at a time when, after poor results by clubs in European competition, the country's resources seem particularly stale.

Brian McAllister's career is untouched by glamour, but despite a gradual development that included spells on loan at Plymouth Argyle and Crewe Alexandra, the Wimbledon centre half has proved as tenacious as his club in the fight for status. At 25, the Glaswegian makes his first appearance in an international squad.

There is even a possibility, however remote, of a cap on the mini-tour — the matches take place on October 5 and 9 — since Colin Hendry, the usual incumbent, continues to have difficulties with a persistent knee injury. "He is a good athlete," Brown said, "who is similar in style to Colin Calderwood."

Four years ago, the manager toyed with the idea of selecting McAllister at under-21 level, but the team of 1992 proved good enough to reach the semi-finals of the European championship and access to it was difficult. That side was captained by Paul Lambert, whose career has taken a course even more astonishing than that of McAllister.

Until this summer he was a well-respected performer with Motherwell who could still expect no more for himself than a modest income and the struggle for a livelihood when his playing days were over. Like a few fortunate others,

though, his circumstances and expectations have been raised dramatically by the Bosman ruling.

When Lambert's contract at Fir Park ended he was fascinated by the thought of leaving and playing on the Continent. Even so, the mid-

SQUAD

A Gorman (Rangers), J. Leighton (Hibernian), N. Walker (Aberdeen), T. Boyd (Coleraine), C. Bailey (Chelsea), C. Calderwood (Fulham), C. Hendry (Blackburn Rovers), B. McAllister (Wimbledon), J. McNamee (Coleraine), T. McInerney (Coleraine), D. Whyte (Middlesbrough), J. Collins (Aberdeen), S. Gemmill (Nottingham Forest), D. Jackson (Hibernian), P. Lambert (Borussia Dortmund), G. McAllister (Covington City), S. McCall (Rangers), A. McCole (Rangers), J. Spence (Chelsea), G. Durie (Rangers), K. Gallacher (Blackburn Rovers), E. Jones (Covington City), W. Dods (Aberdeen).

field player was dumbstruck to discover from his agent that the German team interested in him was not some set of Bundesliga stragglers, but the champions themselves, Borussia Dortmund.

They had admired him ever since playing Motherwell in a UEFA Cup tie and the fact that no transfer fee was required only added to the appeal. The deft Lambert is now said to



Brian McAllister: career has developed slowly

earn some £300,000 a year at Dortmund, a sum 12 times greater than he might have expected at Fir Park.

All the same, he has justified that surge in valuation. Brown hardly needed to hear the recommendation of Bert Vogts, the German coach. Lambert's place as a first team regular, even for the Champions' League victory over Steaua in Bucharest on Wednesday, has established his credentials.

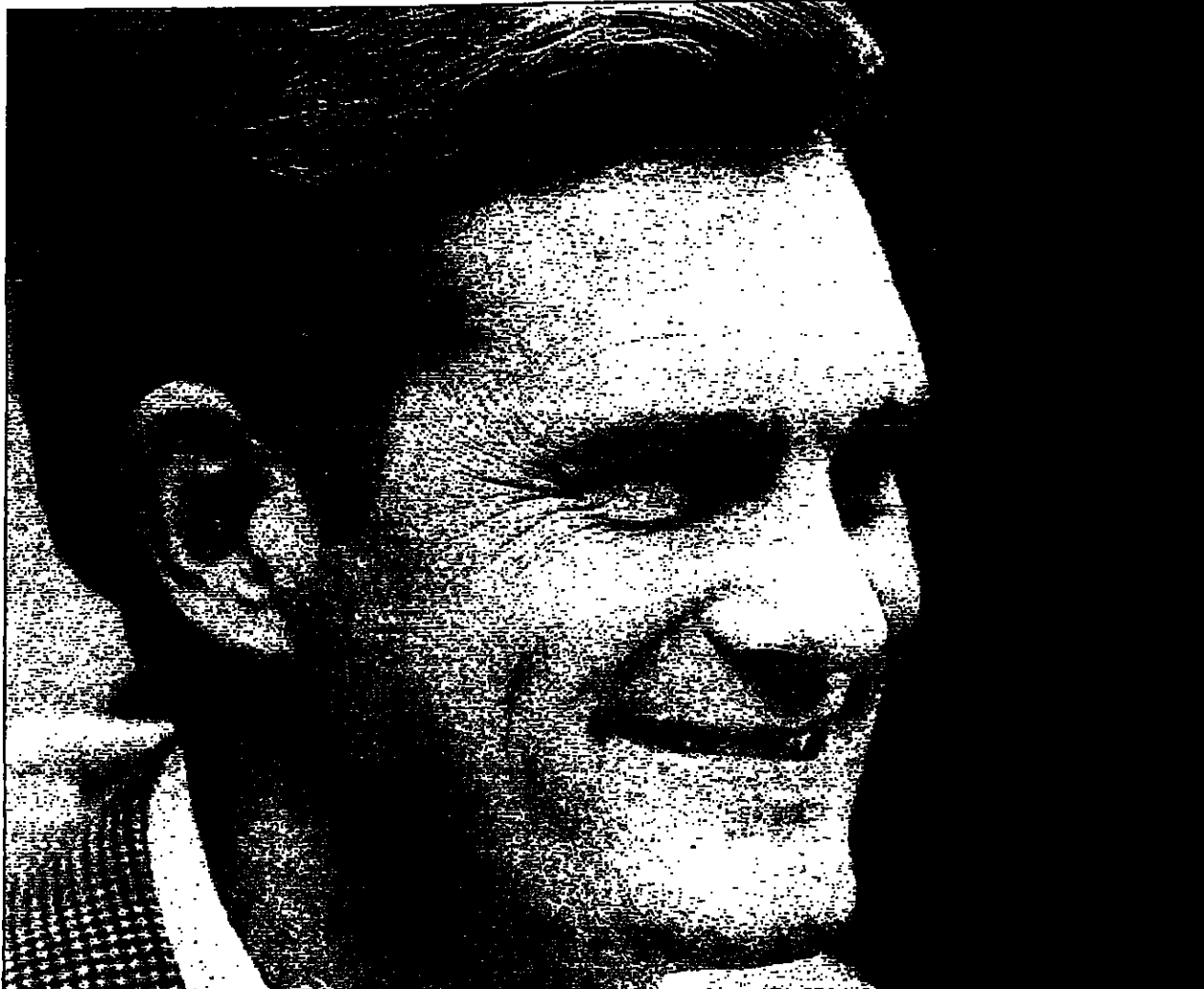
The player has two caps already, both won in obscure matches, but Lambert's standing is now greater than ever. Brown is conscious that his squad contains men who are less firmly entrenched at their clubs. "I have stood by Billy McInerney, Eoin Jess and Scott Gemmill," said Brown, "but I will be talking to them."

"They must get into the first team and they are being threatened by someone like Lambert who is doing well at a high level."

As usual, though, most of the changes Brown is likely to make will be forced upon him. A large party of 24 players reflects the fact that Toshi McKinlay, Stuart McCall, Gordon Durie and Ally McCoist will probably all fail to overcome the injuries which make them doubtful.

With further damage expected to attacking resources already depleted by the loss of the injured Duncan Ferguson, Brown has included the uncapped Billy Dods in the squad. The Aberdeen forward's 14 goals so far this season testify to a new maturity in the 27-year-old.

His efforts and those of the team as a whole may be widely scrutinised. The game in Latvia, on October 5, is now likely to be shown live on television since, with the kick-off put back to 6pm, it no longer clashes with the domestic programme of lower division matches in Scotland.



Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, names his squad yesterday for the match against Poland. Report page 44

Keane missing from Ireland squad

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JOHN ALDRIDGE, the Tranmere Rovers player-manager, has been recalled to the Republic of Ireland squad for the World Cup qualifying tie against Macedonia at Lansdowne Road in Dublin on October 9.

However, two of his distinguished colleagues in Ireland sides of recent years are not in the squad. Roy Keane, the Manchester United midfielder, was to have made his return to international football in the game and was included in the original selection of Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager.

Keane could be out of action for up to three weeks after suffering a dead leg during Manchester United's European Cup Champions' League victory over Rapid Vienna on Wednesday evening.

Also missing is Paul McGrath, although McCarthy

said that the Aston Villa defender will be considered again when he is playing first-team football.

Keane, who has been ordered to rest after his leg became swollen overnight, only made his comeback from a knee injury in the draw at Aston Villa on Saturday. He has not played for his country since being sent off in the 2-0 defeat by Russia in Dublin last March. Injuries, suspensions and a much-publicised decision not to play in end-of-season matches in America means that he has missed the last eight internationals.

Aldridge could win his 69th cap against the Macedonians. The 38-year-old forward has scored 19 international goals — just one short of Frank Stapleton's Irish record. "John has been scoring goals for his club and that is good enough for me, especially with Niall Quinn and Jon Goodman injured," McCarthy said.

Vinnie Jones, the Wimbledon midfielder, was put on stand-by by Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, for the World Cup qualifying tie against Holland in Cardiff tomorrow week.

It was thought that Jones's brief international career had come to an end when he was dropped from recent squads, having gained his fifth cap when he played against Switzerland in April.

"I'm delighted to be involved again," Jones said. "People have written me off at international level but this proves I'm still a part of the manager's plans."

Ballot papers were due to go out today to members of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) playing in the three divisions of the Nationwide League. It is the latest move in the PFA's long-running dispute with the Football League, which runs the Nationwide League, and could

lead to a strike by the players. Efforts to resolve the problem, after lengthy discussions between the PFA and League, appear to have foundered. The PFA is asking for a greater share of the revenue that the League has negotiated through television contracts.

Stewart Houston, the Queens Park Rangers manager, has persuaded Kevin Gallen, the England Under-21 forward, to agree a three-year extension to his contract. The new deal starts next summer. Gallen is unlikely to play again this season after sustaining cruciate ligament damage to his right knee.

IRELAND SQUAD: A. Kelly (Sheff. Wed.), S. Givens (Blackburn), D. Irwin (Manchester United), P. Bala (Sheff. Wed.), J. Kenna (Blackburn Rovers), G. Fleming (Middlesbrough), G. Bressan (Birmingham City), L. Harle (Leeds United), K. Cunningham (Wimbledon), S. Staunton (Aston Villa), A. Townsend (Aston Villa), R. Keane (Manchester United), R. Houghton (Crystal Palace), A. McLoughlin (Preston), J. McNamee (Liverpool), A. Moore (Middlesbrough), K. O'Hall (Aberdeen City), J. Aldridge (Tranmere Rovers), A. Cassidini (Marseille), D. Kelly (Sunderland).

Orrell stand firm over right to pick Botica

ORRELL have selected Frano Botica, the former New Zealand rugby union three-quarter, in the side to play Wasps tomorrow, even though he was paraded by Llanelli in front of their supporters before the match against Swansea last Saturday.

The Welsh club agreed a £75,000 transfer fee with Castleford, Botica's rugby league side, last week, and are today expected to name him in their line-up to play Pontypridd tomorrow. However, Orrell say Botica is obliged to turn out for them. A spokesman said: "His contract with Orrell runs to the end of June 1998 and we expect him to honour that."

Recovery shots

Golf: Four members of Europe's beaten Solheim Cup team put their disappointment behind them in the opening round of the German Open in Hamburg yesterday.

Dale Reid, of Scotland, recorded a 68, five under par, with Lisa Hackney and Joanne Morley, of England, and Marie-Laure de Lorenzi, of France, returning 69s to leave themselves within striking distance of Maria Hjorth, of Sweden, who leads after a 67.

Indurain out

Cycling: Miguel Indurain, the five-times Tour de France winner, yesterday withdrew from the world road race championships in Lugano, Switzerland, next month. Indurain, 32, pulled out of the Tour of Spain last Friday suffering from bronchitis.

Bears roam

Rugby league: Oldham Bears look certain to play all their Super League games and cup-ties at Boundary Park next season. The club is set to quit Watersheddings, its home for more than a century, and move in with its neighbours, Oldham Athletic Football Club, pending the completion of a proposed new stadium.

Few soft options in a hard game

Gerald Davies reflects on the physical lessons learnt by Wales in Wednesday night's defeat by France at Cardiff

ALTHOUGH there is a danger of incurring the wrath of the purists and the guardians of rugby football's integrity, a sympathetic case can be made for the player who retaliates.

There was an example in the match between Wales and France in Cardiff on Wednesday evening. When provocation is taken too far, the perpetrator going unnoticed and unpunished, the innocent party may cry enough is enough. Human nature being what it is, he can be forced to take the law into his own hands.

Richard Dourthe was the culprit. In the seventh minute, he leapt on Evans, grounding the ball for Wales's second try. The France centre took a wiper at the wing. In the second half, he stepped on Leigh Davies's face. None of the officials saw either of these actions. Later, the referee's attention was drawn to a third incident, which involved Davies, and for which Dourthe was cautioned. Later still, Davies took retaliatory action and was spoken to in arm.

It will be recalled that it was Dourthe who attempted to smash Ben Clarke's face last season at Parc des Princes and, as a result of television violence, was suspended. In the best of worlds, Davies, 20, in Cardiff, would have been well-advised to have retained a cool head. It is

regularly the case that it is the perpetrator who is sent off and not the original offender but, clearly, Davies's patience had been severely tested here. Presumably, he was concerned about his well-being.

It might be added that he wanted to make his own point with his opposite number. Davies will have rationalised that, if that was the way the Dax centre wanted to play it, then for the sake of his own reputation he had to prove he was a big enough man not to take that kind of nonsense.

The referee, because he is not in a position to see, cannot always be expected to come to a player's defence. It is a tough old world out there, and the next time that the centres are likely to meet, in the five nations' championship in Paris in February, Davies would not care to be thought of as a soft option. Fear and respect are sometimes packed in the same parcel. Games can be like that and it is not always the innocent who play them.

Rugby is an aggressively confrontational game, but there are those with the mentality to turn it into a violent

one. A player in these circumstances may be forced to look after himself. He cannot altogether be blamed if he does. Self-preservation is a human motivation. That it is so rarely called upon is one of rugby's enduring fascinations.

Whatever flight of fancy we attribute to French rugby, it is based — and allowed to flourish — upon the work of rough-hewn, intimidating forwards. For any opposition to hold out any hope, they must first subdue them. This accounts for England's long run of success against the French. From Moore and Probyn to Lockford, through to Skinner, Winterbottom, Teague and the rest, they had the mettle to do so.

Wales are in no position to do that. They are too young and unproven. Had they such grit, they would not have allowed a 27-10 lead to be transformed into a 40-33 defeat on Wednesday. As yet, they lack the mental and physical hardness.

They won enough ball to play with, but apart from the first half-hour, when their three tries were scored, they lacked penetration. This was due to two factors. First, they failed to support the man with

the ball in sufficient numbers and second, unlike the French, this support, when it came, was too lateral, with their players not arriving from deep enough positions to enable them to generate momentum.

Leigh Davies is an example of this. He is a strong, powerful and deceptive runner, but is often provided with the ball at jogging pace or, worse, when almost static. He is not travelling at pace. He needs to create space for this to happen.

We were left to wonder, too, why it was that Arwel Thomas, who came on as replacement for Iwan Evans, was played on the wing, where he has no experience.

Might not other permutations have functioned better, such as Jenkins in the centre, with Gareth Thomas restored to the wing, or Jenkins at full back, with Proctor on the wing? These players are accustomed to the positions. In both instances, Arwel Thomas — who, despite his brave efforts, looked fragile on the wing — would have been better suited to play in his usual position at stand-off half.

The game did confirm that Gareth Thomas, who was outstanding and is enjoying a fine club season, should be retained in the centre for the match against Italy on October 5. The squad will be announced today.

Peace may follow compromise

THE likelihood of a break-away in Scotland appeared to recede last night after a meeting between the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) and the leading clubs that could provide the basis for a lasting peace formula (Mark Souster writes). After months of wrangling, Scottish First Division Rugby (SFDR), the clubs' representative body, and the SRU agreed on proposals for next season's fixture list that involve compromise by both sides.

While SFDR's final draft addresses the concerns of club and union, the international squad is reluctant, for the moment, to endorse the settlement, as they believe the players will still be expected to play too many games. They have the support of Jim Telfer, the union's director of rugby, who insists the top players should not play more than 30 matches a season.

The framework agreed allows for two ten-team divisions, with automatic promotion and relegation, as well as a play-off. The domestic season would be split into two with clubs playing nine games initially, before the top and bottom five separate to play a further four matches.

Broadcasting doubts will not halt Heineken Cup

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

EUROPEAN rugby's primary development vehicle, the Heineken Cup, not only remains on course but will do so in enhanced form. It was claimed yesterday. Despite the withdrawal of ITV as host broadcaster on Tuesday, European Rugby Cup (ERC) officials believe coverage will be organised, the tournament sponsors will remain loyal and an additional knockout round will be included.

This latter innovation came as something of a surprise to many close to the tournament when Vernon Pugh, chairman of the Welsh Rugby Union and a leading proponent of European rugby, revealed it in Cardiff. One of the complaints of ITV, before Tuesday's decision, was the absence of a quarter-final round yet, according to Pugh, that has been pending for a month.

The quarter-finals are now scheduled for November 16 — originally the date set for the semi-finals, which will now be played on January 4. The Saturday reserved for the final. This may now not take place until after the five nations' championship.

The most likely prospect for

television coverage appears to lie with regional companies in Wales, Ireland and Scotland, who could pick up the tournament for a comparative song such as the need of ERC to find a broadcaster before the tournament begins on October 12. "ITV are prepared to broadcast it but not to put funding in place," Pugh explained.

"They will televise matches and provide a signal for French TV. The end result is not going to be as dramatic as at first sight, but we have had interest from all broadcasters, once they knew ITV were not continuing with the contract."

Pugh referred to a "process of destabilisation", which had affected rugby in Britain over the past year — a reference to the independent stance adopted by the leading English clubs. "Until that settles down, and I hope we may be near that situation, we won't be in the position of having competitions sufficiently secure that people will invest money in them," he added.

The reality of the situation is surely that, whatever assurances may exist for a distribution of money to the participating unions (if at a

lower level than originally envisaged), the sponsoring company has already committed substantial funds to preparing for Europe, as have the clubs themselves who, if they do not go ahead with scheduled fixtures, face a four-week void. However, Pugh admitted that, next season, it might be difficult to sustain the second-tier tournament, the European Conference.

French enthusiasm for the Heineken Cup is high. "It is necessary so that European rugby can make progress," Jean-Claude Skrela, the France national coach, said. "It will offer a level of intensity between club and international rugby which allows our players to make the transition more easily."

Ian McGeechan, coach of the British Isles, who yesterday revealed Adidas as their official kit supplier for next summer's tour to South Africa, described the Heineken Cup as the "key to player development. It offers slightly different rugby, the chance to play against opponents from different countries before meeting them in internationals," he said.

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

Kettle takes over at Stalybridge

By WALTER GAMMIE

STALYBRIDGE Celtic, the bottom-placed club in the Vauxhall Conference, have appointed Brian Kettle as their new manager in succession to Peter Wragg, who resigned a fortnight ago.

Kettle, who left Northwich Victoria in the summer after taking them to the FA Umbro Trophy final, which they lost to Macclesfield Town, had previously guided Southport into the Conference.

Martyn Torr, the Stalybridge secretary, said: "His football record is excellent. I can't say second to none because he hasn't won anything at this level yet, but Brian is a winner and we've got to start winning games."

For Stalybridge, the shaky

start to the season offered a worrying contrast to the enormous strides they have taken in developing Bower Fold to Football League standards.

Two new stands have helped to bring the capacity, and the number of seats, to required minimum levels. "The League came and looked at us last week and gave us a B grading," Torr said. "At least we know what we've got to do. The main task is to install the new type of crush barriers. All the other things are minor."

"When we held the interviews, the chairman [Peter Barnes] told the applicants that he expected the club to have an A grade by the end of the season."

Stalybridge have risen —

On Tuesday 8th October, BT introduce a telephone table everyone will appreciate.

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER...

TODAY'S FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated
Nationwide League
First division

Swindon v Wolverhampton (7.45)

ICIS LEAGUE: Premier division; Oxford City v Hitchin (7.45)

FAI HAMP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division; Bournemouth v Derry (7.45), Shamrock v Home Farm (7.45)

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE SHIELD COMPETITION: Northern section; Longford v Drogheda (7.45)

SCHOOLS MATCHES: English Schools; Fulham Film Trophy; Banbury v North Dorset (at Banbury Utd); Grantham v South Peak (at Grantham FC, 7.0), Newham v Havering (at Millman Stadium, 5.30)

OTHER SPORT

GOLF: Smurfit European Open (in Dublin)

SNOOKER: Regal Masters (at Mothamwell)

SPEEDWAY: Premier League; Bala v Wolverhampton (7.30), Oxford v Poole (7.30), Peterborough v Ipswich Conference League; Challenge; Arena Essex v Eastbourne (8.0)

TENNIS: LTA Satellite tournament (at Telford)

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هكذا من الأصل

Lynne Truss returns kicking and screaming to the football terraces

Vintage whines of Goldstone grumps

Somewhere in the first half of Saturday's game between Brighton and Torquay United, an old bloke in the seat behind me announced he'd been coming to the Goldstone Ground since 1958. Bless him, I thought: I suppose he's so proud of it he has to tell everybody. He probably says "Guess how old I am?" as well. But it wasn't like that. "I've been coming here since 1958," he said, "and this is the worst team we've ever had." I turned in my seat and gave him a big smile and shrug of solidarity. "I know," my smile said, "they're rubbish, aren't they? Not like the good old days. Look, our own Garry Nelson playing for Torquay!" If I hadn't just finished the packet, I'd have offered him a crisp.

Nothing so odd in this convivial moment between supporters, of course, except that unlike this veteran of nearly 40 years, I had been coming to the Goldstone since — ooh, three o'clock that afternoon. But nobody knew this, and besides, I was getting the hang of it quickly. Grumbling is the main thing in football support, as I know from my two experiences of Euro 96 at Wembley, where I at first assumed I was surrounded by dangerous schizophrenics on a Dangerous Schizophrenics Day Out.

"Rubbish, rubbish, take him off," those scary people muttered to each other, and then yelled lustily "Engerland" as if there were no contradiction. Personally, I am rather accomplished at grumbling — perhaps that's why I was selected for this peculiar job. Though I say it myself, I have a natural talent for sustained bellyaching, yet I also keep in practice. For example, I invest many, many hours perfecting just my whingeing and my whining. Why the Goldstone, you ask. Why this dead-and-alive hole on a gritty, cold afternoon, with its East Terrace bone-white and deserted, invaded by weeds? Because I live in Brighton, mostly; also because someone wickedly misled me about Des Lynne (he was nowhere to be seen). Thirdly, *The Times* evidently thought it would be good for me to sit in the cold, in the



Lynne Truss — wearing the wrong scarf — awaits her afternoon entertainment at the Goldstone Ground. Photograph: Martin Beddall

wrong scarf, and sip scalding tea while two third division teams battled below for last place. They were right about the therapeutic effect of sitting in the cold, incidentally. For hours afterwards I felt so warm and glowy indoors that I actually suspected a fever. "Will we get Red Arrows and stuff?" I asked my chum Robert, a Sheffield Wednesday supporter (but long-time Brighton resident), who had offered to pilot me through these unfamiliar waters. I said this as we pushed through the grim, narrow turnstiles into a dank concrete tunnel. I was trying to take my mind off it, you see, like whistling during a smear test. "We might get schoolgirls with pom-poms," he offered, with a cheery cackle. But alas,

such heavy misery hangs like sea-mist over Brighton and Hove Albion that even bedraggled pom-poms are nowhere to be seen. Nearly 5,000 people turned out on Saturday, but not to watch the game.

"Archer out, Archer out," they chanted (to the inevitable tune of *Ere We Go*) and also: "Sack the board, sack the board, sack the board." Police guarded the little VIP box (from which chairman Bill Archer was absent), and there was a minor scuffle at the start of the second half. Brighton and Hove Albion have got rather self-absorbed, of late, and football no longer comes

into it. At half-time there was a pitch invasion, too — but it was only one bloke with long hair who leaped into the middle of the grass and sat down cross-legged before being escorted off, peacefully, to mysterious applause.

'I was getting the hang of it, grumbling is the main thing in football support'

I don't seem to have mentioned much about the game. But I did watch it. It was a 2-2 draw, with several events of note. Torquay were awarded a penalty for no good reason, and our goalie saved it (!), which was jolly exciting. (Rob-

ert said it was unfair I should witness this — real fans can wait years.) What else? Well, the ref showed umpteen yellow cards, doled out free kicks and so on — and, just for the record, I disagreed with him on virtually every decision. He would point firmly in the proposed direction of play, and I would gasp "No! That man is insane!" and then look round to make sure that everyone else agreed.

What made me uneasy was all this "Sack the board" stuff. By all accounts, it is absolutely right that Mr Archer should resign — but it seems a shame that legitimate popular clamour for political change arises at the wrong moments

during a football match, such as when the poor Seagulls are concentrating on kicking the ball in approximately the right direction. During a particularly delicate bit of possession — with lots of passing back and forth — suddenly the crowd starts chanting "Archer out!" and the strategy crumbles. It's such bad manners. I felt genuinely sorry for the players until Robert pointed out that they might be grateful to the chairman for "drawing the heat".

One last thing: I vow I will never remark to another spectator: "If we scored just then, we'd be two up by now!" Even on my pathetically brief experience, it seems to me that this sort of self-evident remark is never really treated with the contempt it deserves.

RADIO CHOICE

How to avoid Arctic neck

A Cry in the Dark. Radio 4, 11.45pm.

Sadly, everything must come to an end, even Joanna Pincock's exceptionally interesting series of sound effects of nocturnal animals. She bids us goodnight on the stretch of Greenland tundra she shares with Bob Burton, who carries a rifle with one bullet "up the spout". Luckily, the ominous grunts they hear are not from polar bears but from two musk-oxen, pointlessly head-butting each other. Burton is a mine of information about Arctic wildlife. Thanks to him, I now know what Arctic neck is. It is the stiffness that afflicts you if you keep looking apprehensively over your shoulder. Something else I learnt: it is not easy to have a confidential chat with someone on the Greenland tundra. Even a whisper can carry great distances.

Gerhard Centenary. Radio 3, 7.30pm.

You may well ask: what are Manuel de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* and Britten's *Prelude and Fugue for 18-Part String Orchestra* doing in a programme celebrating the centenary of the Catalan composer Gerhard Centenary? This is easily explained. Gerhard had two contemporaries, Falla in his native Spain, and Britten in his adoptive country, Britain. The reason tonight's concert was recorded in Cambridge is that it's the home of the Britten Sinfonia who perform two of Gerhard's concertos, for harpsichord and piano, and the original 1915 version of de Falla's *El Amor Brujo*, scored for chamber orchestra and soprano. Peter Daville

RADIO 1

FM Stereo 6.30am Chris Evans 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa 2.00pm Nicky Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier 7.00 Essential Selection 10.00 One in the Jungle 12.00 Radio 1 Rap Show with Tim Westwood 3.00pm Anne Nightingale 6.00 Charlie Jordan

RADIO 2

FM Stereo 6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Jenny Jones 1.30pm Debbie Thompson 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Durm 7.00 Mad about Music 7.30 Friday Night is Music Night 8.45 Every Living Thing 9.00 Listen to the Band 10.00 A Night in Aldeburgh Radio 2 Arts Programme 12.05am Sue McGarry

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports, and 6.45 Wake Up to Money 6.00 The Breakfast Programme and at 6.55, 7.55 (using backup 6.35 The Magazine, with Brian Hayes, and 10.35 News from Europe 12.00 Midday with Mail, and 12.35pm Moneychat, with Philippa Lamb 2.05 Ruscoe on Five, and 3.45 Entertainment News 4.00 Nationwide, and at 5.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra, with David Meade 7.35 Parkinson on Sport 8.30 Friday Sport, with Robin Bailey Football, Swindon Town v Wolves Plus, a review of the week's European football, 10.05 Paper Talk, with Jay Rayner and Brian Alexander 11.00 Night Extra, with David Meade 12.05am After Hours 2.05 Up All Night, with Richard Dalrymple

TALK RADIO

5.00am Early Breakfast 7.00 Paul Ross 8.00 Scott Crichton 12.00 Anna Rumb 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Drivehome, with Peter Dinkley 7.00 Moe Day's Sportszone 10.00 Mike Allen 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, Presented by Andrew McGregor, Telerann (No 10), Strauss (Don Quixote), Weber (Concertaino in E flat), Sarasate (Zigeunerweisen), Beethoven (Choral Fantasy)

9.00 Morning Collection, with Paul Gambaccini Schubert (Symphony No 9 in C) 10.00 Musical Encounters, with Piers Burton-Page, Locke (Psyche, Act 5), Britten (Occasional Overture), Fild (The Earth Overseas), Wagner (Hagen Summons the Vassals), Reger (Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Bach, Op 61), Libum (Symphony No 3)

12.00 Composers of the Week: The Court of James VI 12.30pm Over the Borders, Music from across Europe in the time of James VI

1.00 News: Chamber Music from Manchester, introduced by Rodney Staddon, Antonio Bartoli (Sonatas 3 in A minor, 3 in D minor)

2.00 Preconcertos, featuring cellist Steven Isserlis talking about a subject which is close to his heart 2.15 Letz La Luzerne Gondola Steven Isserlis, cello; Stephen Hough, piano

2.15 Music Restored (3/7) (A)

RADIO 4

5.55 Shipping Forecast 6.00 News Briefing 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Player for the Day 6.30 Today 7.15, 8.25 Sport 7.45 Thought for the Day 8.40 The Swiss Family

9.00 News 9.05 Desert Island Discs: Fran Leicester (1) 9.45 Gerry's Bar (3/4) 10.00 News Witnessing History (FM), the opening of Ronnie Scott's club in Gerard Street on 31 October 1959

10.00 An Act of Worship (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW) 10.30 Women's Hour 11.30 The Natural History Programme

12.00 News; You and Yours 12.25pm The Food Programme 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One 1.40 The Archers 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News: The Classic Series: Dombey and Son, Michael Bakewell's soap-dramatisation of Charles Dickens's story (1951)

3.00 News The Afternoon Shift, with Laurie Taylor 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope 4.45 Short Story: Gode's Story, by A.S. Byatt 5.00 PM, with Chris Lowe and Peter Hunt 5.50 Shipping Forecast 5.55 Weather 6.00 Six O'Clock News

6.00 Six O'Clock News

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1, FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.6. LW 148; MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE, MW 693, 909. WORLD SERVICE, MW 598; LW 189 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO, MW 1052, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McKinnon.

HOCKEY

West Witney entice Parker back to fold in new guise

By ALIX RAMSAY

WHERE do old hockey players go once they have hung up their sticks? The answer, apparently, is West Witney. Two years ago, Kate Parker retired from hockey, vowing never to return. Her international career had brought her 80 caps with Great Britain and England, her league career had taken her to three national league titles with Slough and, after a couple of years with non-league Reading, she decided enough was enough. Then West Witney won

promotion to division two of the national league. Before long, Parker's friends at the club had coaxed her back into the fold as coach. Together with Denise Shorney, her colleague from Slough and Reading, she is back in hockey and back in harness. Division two may be a far cry from her days at Slough, but it does have its advantages. "They are like sponges, they take in everything you say," Parker said. "They have a lot of skilful players but they

are naive tactically. They seem to have muddled through somehow with their own individual talents and made it up as they have gone along."

With Parker's experience to guide them, West Witney are keen to learn and, armed with Parker's seven-week fitness programme, the squad worked hard during the summer. They began their league season with a 1-0 win over St Albans, thanks to a goal from Ann Glover and two penalty saves from Linda Billington, and now their new coach is looking for a top-three position at the end of the season. Their next opponents are Old Loughtonians on Sunday.

Being able to get her point across during training makes a refreshing change from life at the bigger clubs, where the more experienced players like to voice their opinions, which sometimes leads to chaos. "That's the beauty of West Witney," Parker said. "No one thinks they are better than anyone else. They are as green as you like about the national league, but everyone just gets on with it."

For Parker and Shorney, the one flaw in the set-up concerns their future as players. In case of injuries, both have been persuaded to register as playing members of the club. At 32, and after two seasons away from the game, the thought of getting match-fit terrifies Parker. "Not only that, but I gave all my sticks away when I retired," she said.

Being the friendly souls they are, though, the ladies of West Witney will no doubt lend her one.

CYCLING

Zulle edges closer to tour success

By PETER BRYAN

ALEX ZULLE has spent years chasing cycling's biggest prizes and, at last, the Swiss is on the verge of winning his first leading tour. With just three stages left, including a time-trial, his specialty, tomorrow and a flat, sprinters' run to the finish in Madrid on Sunday, the Tour of Spain is within his grasp.

Ironically, Zulle's cause has been helped by a stomach virus that has affected his team, ONCE, for the past three days. His closest challenger, Laurent Jalabert, last night, from France, appeared to succumb to it yesterday, dropping far out of contention.

Almost from the start of the nineteenth stage between Getafe, south of Madrid, and Avila to the northwest of the capital, Jalabert was noticeably absent from the main action, finally finishing more than 20 minutes behind the stage winner, Laurent Dufaux of Switzerland. Dufaux started the day 5min 17sec down on Zulle and, once Jalabert's hopes were eclipsed, became the new challenger, mounting his decisive attack on the long, cobbled climb to the finish.

Dufaux's victory, coupled with Jalabert's failure, took him to second position overall, within 4min 22sec of Zulle. He is promising to attack again today.

RESULTS. Nineteenth stage (Getafe to Avila, 217 km): 1. L. Dufaux (Swiss) 6h 55min 30sec; 2. D. Napolitano (It) 6h 57min 30sec; 3. J. L. Garcia (Span) 6h 58min 30sec; 4. J. P. Chazotte (Fr) 6h 59min 30sec; 5. R. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 00min 30sec; 6. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 01min 30sec; 7. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 02min 30sec; 8. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 03min 30sec; 9. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 04min 30sec; 10. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 05min 30sec; 11. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 06min 30sec; 12. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 07min 30sec; 13. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 08min 30sec; 14. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 09min 30sec; 15. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 10min 30sec; 16. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 11min 30sec; 17. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 12min 30sec; 18. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 13min 30sec; 19. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 14min 30sec; 20. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 15min 30sec; 21. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 16min 30sec; 22. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 17min 30sec; 23. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 18min 30sec; 24. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 19min 30sec; 25. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 20min 30sec; 26. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 21min 30sec; 27. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 22min 30sec; 28. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 23min 30sec; 29. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 24min 30sec; 30. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 25min 30sec; 31. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 26min 30sec; 32. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 27min 30sec; 33. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 28min 30sec; 34. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 29min 30sec; 35. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 30min 30sec; 36. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 31min 30sec; 37. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 32min 30sec; 38. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 33min 30sec; 39. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 34min 30sec; 40. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 35min 30sec; 41. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 36min 30sec; 42. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 37min 30sec; 43. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 38min 30sec; 44. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 39min 30sec; 45. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 40min 30sec; 46. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 41min 30sec; 47. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 42min 30sec; 48. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 43min 30sec; 49. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 44min 30sec; 50. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 45min 30sec; 51. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 46min 30sec; 52. P. Chazotte (Fr) 7h 47min 30sec; 53. P. 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Laugh? I almost named the absent father

Dear Peter Lilley, I expect you are too busy to watch television at present, instead spending the evenings drafting your speech for the Conservative conference in your capacity as social security secretary. We all look forward to it, cracking as it will be with the usual hilarious one-liners and memorable bon mots. Not for nothing are you known as the Cabinet's answer to Gordon Brown.

However, even one of your speeches is often confused with the writings of S.J. Perelman, may benefit from outside input. I suggest you call in a couple of terrific women from the Child Support Agency, as featured in last night's second part of *The System* on BBC2. Although the series is essentially about the serious matter of the welfare state (as you will know because you appeared in part one), these two proved to be unwitting providers of the light relief that conference so craves.

I offer two examples, Mr Lilley, confident that you will find room for them. One suits a conference speech particularly well, for it is an anecdote whose authenticity cannot possibly be established. Apparently a woman interviewed by the CSA said that she could not identify the father of her child because "at the time she was hanging out of a window at a party being sick".

I suggest you take a sip of water at this point, Mr Lilley (I certainly have) and back in the startling sight of the party faithful rolling in the aisles with their feet in the air, an inversion, more or less, of the position adopted by the woman in the anecdote. You might, as a linked postscript, add the suggestion by another woman at the CSA that the agency should send out condoms with its forms (loud applause from *prone faithful*).

Not that the Child Support

Agency is a laughing matter. Your speech will undoubtedly include the fact that the agency has collected £300 million this fiscal year, the first time it has met Government targets since its troubled formation in 1993.

Will you also be mentioning that the agency is at present owed about £900 million, of which, according to the CSA itself, £700 million is "probably uncollectable"? On balance, I think I would incline towards omitting that bit, were I in your Hush Puppies. That could knock a full minute off the standing ovation, as could the unfortunate news that benefit savings credited to the CSA this year are just 5 per cent of all spending on lone parents.

Mind you, the CSA is up against some pretty odd fellows: a woman who is trying to sue Labour for showing no signs of abating its Labour's shooting stars continues to do its best to lampoon the genre. But so, under the incomparable Les Dawson, did *Blankety Blank*. And so, for more than 20 years on radio, has *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*. Admirably no sign she can boast a successor as bizarre as the extraordinary adult "baby", played by Matt Lucas. And the resident team captains are shrewdly cast, if only because Ulrika Jonsson never stops laughing and Mark Lamarr never stops. Tonight they are joined by Cannon and Ball, Samantha Beckinsale and Richard E. Grant. All enter into the irreverent spirit but overall there is more noise than wit.

REVIEW



Peter Barnard

then wife became pregnant through artificial insemination. Another took a woman on a 21-day holiday abroad. He only enjoyed three days, during which she became pregnant. He isn't paying because he had not wanted her to have a baby.

Last night's programme did contain, by implication, one money-saving suggestion that would surely bring conference to

its feet, once it has climbed back on to them from its position in the aisles. At present, the CSA gives women who are reluctant to name their child's father six weeks to do so. After six weeks, yet another letter is sent out giving them two more weeks, on pain of having their benefit reduced. At this point, the women start ringing the CSA.

May I suggest, Mr Lilley, that as the threat in the second letter works, it would make sense to contain it within the first letter, thus saving several hundred thousand stamps, envelopes and sheets of A4. Announce that change, slap on a nice uncollectable saving (£10 million sounds perfect), step back from podium, raise arms, bask in ovation. Yours in anticipation.

Of course social problems come in many guises and another of them was featured in *Inside Out: From the Ashes* (Channel 4). This was about Carol Rigby, who in 1978 started a fire at the National

Theatre, where she worked as a nurse. The programme was a story of her rehabilitation, including a spell in Broadmoor and the painful attempts to face memories of abuse during childhood.

Carol says that she received minimal treatment in Broadmoor, where "they looked blank" when she mentioned the abuse. Latterly, the subject has become better understood and a psychiatrist described how starting a fire was often "calling the fire brigade to your life", a redemptive piece of imagery and a nice change from psycho-babble.

I was determined to mention *Top Gear* (BBC2) today in the hope that Jeremy Clarkson was behaving in his usual insufferable, though strangely endearing, manner. He nearly let me down, but then he made the following announcement after testing one vehicle: "I could call this car

fabulous, but it's much better than that."

Clarkson is a grand fellow who can drive you mad with crazy exaggerations. He needs bubble-captions sprouting from his lips with lots of exclamation marks, but effective behaviour is *de rigueur* in motoring circles.

Top Gear is good at items which really matter to drivers and Quentin Willson reported last night on customer care, an area in which car companies have long been appallingly lax. A woman with a new car took four months to get a replacement steering rack and a man whose wife's car failed to start nine times in a row spent months extracting a replacement (car, not wife).

There is good news: Rover are apparently right at the top in terms of looking after their customers and they're British. I throw that in as possible standing-ovation material for the transport minister.

6.00am Business Breakfast (52089)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (CeeFax) (76060)

9.00 Breakfast News Extra (4124621)

9.20 Style Challenge (s) (4603535) 9.45

Kilroy (s) (1839621) 10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (52805)

11.00 News and weather (Teletext) (4128553)

11.05 FILM: *Where the Lies Bloom* (1974)

with Julie Goslin, Jan Smithers and Hany Dean Stanton. Drama about four children who are determined to keep their father's death from the authorities. Directed by William A. Graham (s) (3643026)

12.45pm Blooming Lovely (50470391)

1.00 News and weather (CeeFax) (86447)

1.30 Regional News and weather (45871331)

1.40 Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (32149350)

2.00 Call My Bluff (s) (6714843) 2.35

Turnabout (s) (1343621) 3.00 Peter

Seabrook's Gardening Week (4455)

3.30 The Animals of Farming World (s)

(CeeFax) (s) (8204263) 3.55 Dear Mr

Barker (s) (6784178) 4.10 The Real

Adventures of Jonny Quest (CeeFax)

(s) (7131992) 4.35 Grange Hill (s)

(CeeFax) (s) (4364398) 5.00 Newsround

(CeeFax) (7447114) 5.10 Blue Peter

(CeeFax) (2150973)

5.30 Neighbours (s) (CeeFax) (s) (853094)

6.00 News and weather (CeeFax) (869)

6.30 Regional news magazines (821)

7.00 Muppets Tonight! Frantic family entertainment. John Goodman from Roseanne makes a guest appearance tonight (CeeFax) (s) (33338)

7.25 Top of the Pops (CeeFax) (s) (528973)

8.00 This Is Your Life. Michael Aspel surprises another personality with the Big Red Book (CeeFax) (s) (5114)

8.30 Keeping Up Appearances. Hyacinth is determined to star in Emmet's forthcoming amateur production of *The Boyfriend* (CeeFax) (s) (4621)

9.00 News, regional news and weather (CeeFax) (5331)

9.30 Dangerfields: Scars. Paul Dangerfield is drawn into the life of PC Dave Chapman, when he is called to examine the officer after a fight at the station. An offender with a history of mental illness claims that Chapman attacked him without warning, but his version of events differs considerably from Chapman's. Starring Nigel Le Vallant (CeeFax) (s) (996178)

10.20 FILM: *Escape from New York* (1981)

with Kurt Russell, Lee Van Cleef, Ernest Borgnine and Donald Pleasence. Bizarre drama set in the future. Manhattan has become a high-security prison, where a ruthless gang who have kidnapped the American President take refuge. A disgraced police officer effects a rescue. The long-delayed general, *Escape from New York*, is now on release. Directed by John Carpenter (CeeFax) (821468)

11.55 FILM: *The House of Seven Gables* (1973) with John Ireland, Faith Domergue and John Carradine. A cheap but chilling horror. A film crew decide to use a reputedly haunted house as a location, a decision they soon come to regret. Directed by Paul Harrison (148909)

1.25am-1.30 Weather (2055374)

6.00am Open University: What You Never Knew about Sex (285621) 6.25

Authority in 16th-century Europe (2874756) 6.50 Santa Spirit (514219)

7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (8246350)

7.30 AHN (5988640) 7.55 White Fang (s)

(2751718) 8.20 The GreedySaurus

Gang (s) (1567008) 8.25 Spider (s) (s)

(8973466) 8.35 Lasso (s) (2119350)

9.00 French Experience (8131911) 9.15

Business Studies (103758) 9.45

Watch (8248534) (1000) Playdays

(60811) 10.30 What? When? Where? Why? (5390008) 10.45 Revolve

(5388263) 11.00 Look and Read

(9165391) 11.20 Short Circuit

(5228992) 11.40 English (3863550)

12.00 Death of a Salesman (74027)

12.30pm Working Lunch (42658) 1.00

Scene (84068) 1.30 Technology

(4589353)

1.45 Words and Pictures (s) (4589808)

2.00 The GreedySaurus Gang (s)

(8888278) 2.05 Spider (s) (s)

(99232224) 2.10 Open View (7082963)

2.15 Scottish National Party Conference (s)

(5340263) 3.00 News (7515892) 3.05

The Natural World (5873027) 3.55

News (4357350) 4.00 Today's Day

(s) (534) 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (s)

(718) 5.00 Esther (s) (4244) 5.30 Going, Going, Gone (s) (398)

6.00 Sliders (s) (CeeFax) (s) (444892)

6.45 Electric Circus. Entertainment magazine (510337)

7.00 Mordicus the Buzzard (4008) WALES: The Fred Dibnah Story

7.35 A Week to Remember (d/v) (807176)

7.45 One Man and His Dog. Sheepdog trials from Connaught, Shropshire (CeeFax) (722263)

8.30 English Country Garden (CeeFax) (s) (2263)

9.00 Shooting Stars. Return of the celebrity quiz show (CeeFax) (s) (3973)

9.30 All Rise for Julian Clary (CeeFax) (s) (82534)

10.00 The Fall Guy. In this last of the series, Danny Brown has to persuade clients at a top hairdresser salon that he is a genuine stylist and then goes to referee a football match between two Manchester garages (CeeFax) (s) (75756)

10.30 Newswatch (CeeFax) (382758)

11.15 The Larry Sanders Show (CeeFax) (s) (796355) 11.40 Seinfeld (CeeFax) (s) (617824) 12.05am Grace under Fire (CeeFax) (s) (1544225)

12.30 FILM: *Love in the Afternoon* (1972) with Bernard Verley, Zouzou, Françoise Verley and Daniel Ceccaldi. A happily married man's passions are aroused by an old flame re-entering his life. Directed by Eric Rohmer. In French with English subtitles (322799). Ends at 2.10

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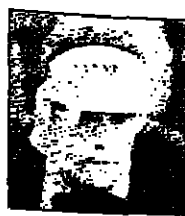
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GOLF 39

Harrington's record brings a smile to Irish eyes

SPORT

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27 1996

BOXING 39

Benn to sign off with world title bout against Collins



England recall for Arsenal midfield player completes welcome rehabilitation

Reformed Merson returns to the fold

By ROB HUGHES
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

ALL life, it sometimes appears, flows through the shirts of England's national football team. Yesterday, Glenn Hoddle, still a very young coach, selected his squad for the World Cup qualifying match at Wembley on October 9 against Poland. It includes, for the first time, Dominic Matteo, the Liverpool defender, who, by birth, could have played for Scotland and, by lineage, could have played for Italy, the land of his grandfather. Moreover, Hoddle re-claimed for his England camp Paul Merson, who, this time two years ago, seemed lost to Arsenal, lost to the game and very nearly lost to normal life as he fought addictions to alcohol, drugs and gambling.

Hoddle did not, this time, choose Neil Ruddock, being kept out of Liverpool's eleven

SQUAD

D Seaman (Arsenal), I Walker (Tottenham Hotspur), D James (Liverpool), G Southgate (Aston Villa), S Pearce (Nottingham Forest), G Neville (Manchester United), G Pallister (Manchester United), S Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur), D Matteo (Liverpool), P Leese (Italy), P Gascoigne (Rangers), D Beckham (Manchester United), S McKenna (Liverpool), D Batty (Newcastle United), A Hinchcliffe (Everton), D Platt (Arsenal), P Merson (Arsenal), N Barmby (Middlesbrough), A Shearer (Newcastle United), L Ferdinand (Newcastle United), M Le Tissier (Southampton), E Shevchenko (Tottenham Hotspur), R Fowler (Liverpool)

by Matteo. Ruddock spent yesterday in court in Southport, where Matteo was raised, and heard a magistrate tell him he had "blatantly lied" to police investigating the crashing of his Porsche 911. Ruddock, convicted of wilfully obstructing police after the accident involving his luxury sports car and a friend, was fined £300 and ordered to pay £200 prosecution costs — minus sums to the millionaire footballer's lifestyle.

Another player temporarily left out of Hoddle's selection is Tony Adams — not, the England coach insisted, because he, too, has admitted an alcoholic dependency, but because his fitness after knee surgery does not yet warrant a recall.

Hoddle insisted that the choices he has made have been taken on "purely footballing grounds". Pure they may be, simple certainly not. On the human scale of things, the return of north



Merson's recovery, after his drinking, drug and alcohol addictions and the tearful confession of his problems, culminated with Wednesday's goal against Borussia Mönchengladbach and yesterday's England recall

London's errant son, Paul Charles Merson, now 28 and potentially at the prime of life where experience meets physical fitness, has messages far and wide. "Paul has come back this season leaner than ever, he is performing extremely well," Hoddle insisted. "Picking him has nothing to do with the other situation, whatever people might think."

Really? Hoddle conceded that, across the spectrum of society, there will be people "going through a bad time in life" who can draw an example from the way Merson is dealing with his problems. "It's a great example for people, who, perhaps, are not in the public eye," Hoddle said. "All credit to the lad [Merson]. All credit to people who stood by him, people who counselled him... it takes a lot to come out and say the

things that Paul did. I'm not a counsellor, but I'm not sure that you ever do get over addictions. You only can deal with them and Paul Merson is doing that."

Merson himself resurrected an old footballing cliché yesterday. "I'm over the moon," he said. "I played 14 times for England before, but this is much, much bigger. I'm so proud, it hasn't just been me, me... Then, as he has learnt to do, he listed the helpers — the Football Association, which, rather than banish the player and crush the man, became involved not just in his personal counselling but in setting up machinery to detect and help other vulnerable players; his family; even dear old Arsenal, with so many problems at its door, where David Dein, the vice-chairman, stood two years ago

and proclaimed: "Parents do not abandon their children and we are going to stand by Paul Merson."

So much has gone under the Highbury bridge in those two years, but I retain the image of Merson the day he admitted

his problems. His eyes vacant, his body trembling slightly, but his very presence brave in the extreme, he said: "This is the hardest thing I've ever done. But I want to get back into the Arsenal team first of all and then go all the way into

England's team again. That's not out of the question. I believe."

Yesterday, Merson, clear of eye and purpose, confessed again, though it was a very light confession. "I said that about England, but in the back of my mind I didn't think it was on. Stewart Houston [now departed from Arsenal to manage Queens Park Rangers] kept me going. He told me to aim for the stars and I might hit the roof. Today, I've hit the stars."

Merson is actually in better shape this season than many regular England players. He relaxed in the summer with his family in the United States, came back physically rested and mentally eager, compared to so many of the players of 16 countries who pushed themselves to the limits during Euro 96. Some of them —

Darren Anderton and Adams to name but two — ran through pain and have been footballing cripples ever since.

Matteo, by comparison, has seen little of the sporting high life. Born in Dumfries, Scotland, 22 years ago, with a grandfather, Angelo, who came from central Italy to open a fish and chip shop in Scotland, he and his family moved to Southport when he was five. He became a noted 1,500 metre runner, but preferred football and spent three seasons in reserve to four central defenders who cost Liverpool almost £12 million to purchase. By the end of last season, he had played only 23 first-team games, some of those on the left side of defence or midfield.

"We must have had 20 or 30 offers to buy him or take him on loan," Roy Evans, the

Liverpool manager, recalled. "We refused them all. We were waiting for his talent to come out for us." As a player with an eye for coming out of defence with the ball, a defender who can pass, a player comfortable in the central position of a mobile three-man defence, Matteo is in embryo what Hoddle is looking for, indeed what Terry Venables sought before him.

Until yesterday, Matteo did not believe that he was on the brink of England selection. He is still only that and the coach reiterated last night: "I've seen Matteo three times, John Gorman, my assistant, has seen him three times and every scout we've sent came back marking him nine out of ten. But I agree with Roy Evans: he's got to prove it over more than eight or nine games. I think he can."

PAUL MERSON FACTFILE

1968: Born March 20, Northolt, Middlesex.
1984: Joins Arsenal as trainee.
1986: Senior Arsenal debut as substitute before joining Brentford on loan for two months.
1988: Establishes first-team place.
1989: Scores 14 goals in 36 games as Arsenal land League title.
1990-91: Plays only 25 matches, banned from Highbury for two weeks and reports of drinking and gambling debts.
1990-91: 16 goals in 48 appearances to earn second Championship medal.
1992: Makes England debut as substitute against Germany. Dropped by Arsenal manager

George Graham and accused of being out of condition.
1993: Goalscorer as Arsenal win Coca-Cola Cup, FA Cup winner.
1994: Wins European Cup-Winners Cup medal. Dropped by Arsenal in October on grounds of poor fitness. Confesses cocaine habit and enters addiction unit.
1995: Resumes training with Arsenal on January 16. Makes comeback against AC Milan.
1995-96: Plays every game of Arsenal's season for first time.
1996: Allowed by Bruce Rioch to miss two-match tour of Italy when feared he was suffering relapse. Scores four goals in nine games to start season.

Matteo rewards Dalglish's judgment

By PETER BALL

FEW people, if any, have made as large a contribution to Liverpool Football Club as Kenny Dalglish and one of his minor decisions for the club was marked yesterday with the selection of Dominic Matteo in the England squad for the World Cup qualifying match with Poland next month.

Dalglish not only signed Matteo for Liverpool during his time as the manager at

Anfield, but he was instrumental in taking Matteo to the club, spotting him playing for Birkdale United while watching his own son, Paul. His progress is further evidence of the success of Liverpool's youth policy, which Dalglish was instrumental in establishing and which has seen Matteo joining Robbie Fowler and Steve McManaman in the England squad.

Although he got into the team earlier than Fowler, during Graeme Souness's time

as manager, Matteo's development has been slower. Nevertheless, Roy Evans, the present Liverpool manager, said yesterday: "I've always bracketed Dominic with McManaman, Fowler and Jamie Redknapp, even though he wasn't in the team for a while when they were. There was a time when I was not sure if he'd make it — when he was 19, he didn't seem as mature as a 19-year-old should be — but now he has matured mentally and physically. Now,

he goes out with the right mental attitude all the time."

So much so that he is keeping Neil Ruddock and John Scales out of the Liverpool team. His performances at the heart of the defence have been one of the key elements in their successful start to the season, his ability on the ball even leading to comparisons with Alan Hansen, the stylish former Liverpool defender, who said, generously, of Matteo yesterday: "He's a better player than I was at 22."

Swindon back new game of chance

Russell Kempson on a first division club's novel venture into the world of gambling

Bond stood bolt upright, displaying not a flicker of emotion as the ball nestled on 29 black for the third successive spin. "Oh, James," cooed the blonde at his shoulder, staring at the skyscraper of chips that had been thrust his way. Bond shrugged and turned to leave. Another successful stint at the tables: another fun night out... at the County Ground, Swindon.

Mayfair or Monte Carlo is most certainly not but, in 15 months, Swindon Town Football Club should become part of the gambling glitterati. It announced yesterday that it is to house a casino — believed to be the first such venture of its kind in Europe, perhaps the world — and is hoping to attract the high-rollers of Wiltshire to its plush on-site premises.

The announcement brought some relief for Steve McMahon, the Swindon player-manager, who was recovering from manipulative surgery on his bad back. He will be allocated a generous slice, for team strengthening, of the £130,000-a-year rent that Swindon will receive from the owners, Grosvenor Casinos.

"I don't think the temptation to gamble will be a problem for our players — they're all sensible lads," McMahon said. "Anything which raises money for the club has got to be a good idea. Perhaps it will give us an incentive when the chips are down." McMahon is also receiving treatment for bad scriptwriting.

Grosvenor, a subsidiary of The Rank Organisation, is the largest casino operator in the United Kingdom, with 32 venues. It claims that the latest addition to its stable, a project costing £2 million, will create 100 jobs locally.

"The perception of casinos is misunderstood," Mike Allison, the Grosvenor chairman, said. "People believe what

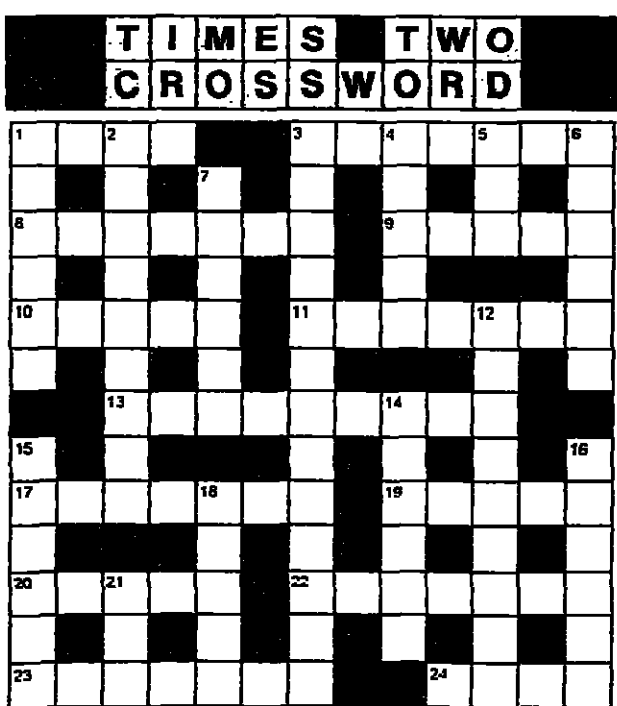


Allison, left, and Michael Spearman, Swindon Town's chairman, at the club's casino announcement yesterday

they see on TV or in the movies, that it is an expensive, 007-type environment, but it really isn't like that. It is non-elitist entertainment, a low-cost mainstream leisure activity. Our average member visits us once a month and spends less than £200."

Grosvenor is still playing the percentages, though the dice do appear to be loaded in its favour. It is banking on changes to the 1968 Gaming Act that will allow it to open in Swindon, on planning permission from Thamesdown Borough Council, Swindon's landlords, and the granting of a gaming licence.

The casino, 12,000 square feet wedged into a corner of the County Ground, will not affect the stadium's 15,760 capacity. From 2pm to 4am each day, punters will be able to indulge in roulette, blackjack, stud poker or punto banco. If they need a break, and Swindon are at home, there is a viewing gallery.



No 898

ACROSS

- Impetuous: spots (4)
- Small amount (7)
- Allude to (7)
- Pay received for work (5)
- Firm: not hollow (5)
- Groceries — fr. farceur (7)
- Dictatorial (4)
- One-volume collection: a PSV (7)
- Of the law (5)
- Arboreal: an anchor (5)
- Silhouette (7)
- Beer mug (7)
- Hideous (4)

DOWN

- Neglectful (6)
- Only card in suit (9)
- Trustworthy chap (5,2,4,4)
- Wealth brought by bride (5)
- Tooth on wheel (3)
- Old court drama/dance (6)
- Nurse, guardian (6)
- Tolerant, relaxed (4-5)
- One dedicated to nonish life (6)
- Sure thing (3,3)
- Drowsy: (town) dead-and-alive (6)
- Stalin's police chief (5)
- Dim, sickly pale (3)

The solution to 897 will be published Wednesday, October 2

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Apartheid assassin links superspy to murder of Palme

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

EUGENE DE KOCK, the former head of a covert South African police hit squad, yesterday linked an apartheid spy to the assassination of Olaf Palme, the former Swedish Prime Minister, whose murder ten years ago has never been solved.

Colonel de Kock told Pretoria's Supreme Court that Craig Williamson, a former "superspy", had played a role in the assassination of Palme through Operation Long Reach, a secret military intelligence "front" company dealing in covert operations aimed at eliminating opponents of apartheid abroad.

A recurring item of contention during the trial has been De Kock's secret approach to the Attorney-General's Office in what has been interpreted as an attempt to win an amnesty or a remission in his sentence. It was during questioning on this matter that De Kock referred to Palme's assassination. The State did not ask him to elaborate on his claim.

Mr Williamson was one of the white-minority Government's most notorious spies during the 1980s and an active member of the former ruling National Party. He has admitted to carrying out bombings and other attacks

on anti-apartheid activists. De Kock, who once boasted he was apartheid's most effective assassin, told the court last week that Mr Williamson was involved in the 1982 bombing of the African National Congress offices in London. Detectives from Scotland Yard last year travelled to South Africa to investigate Mr Williamson's link to the bombing.

De Kock, 48, whose testimony is gripping South Africa and is expected to lead to other trials, made the claim on the third day of cross-examination in mitigation of the life sentence he is facing after his conviction last month on 89 charges, including six mur-



Williamson: admitted bombings on activists

ders, connected to his work as a hit squad leader during the 1980s and early 1990s.

He gave no indication what motive Mr Williamson would have had for involvement in Palme's murder, but the Swedish leader was an outspoken critic of the apartheid regime and leaders of the then exiled ANC were among his friends. Before his assassination, he was hosting an ANC delegation in Stockholm and had been having high-level parliamentary discussions, which would have extended private and public support to the ANC.

Palme was shot dead from behind by a lone gunman on a snowy Stockholm street on the night of February 28, 1986, as he walked home from the cinema, and his assassination has never been solved. A Swedish alcoholic was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1989 but released on appeal later the same year. In a flurry of speculation after his death, South Africa's apartheid Government was mentioned.

Stockholm: Detectives trying to unlock the mystery of Palme's murder said last night that a possible link to a South African spy could be a fresh lead. "Part of the De Kock information is new," one investigator said. (Reuters)

Protester leaps to death in island row

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG AND ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

A HONG KONG activist died in the waters off disputed islands close to China yesterday as tension rose between Tokyo and Peking.

David Chan, who could barely swim, jumped off a protest vessel from Hong Kong shouting: "We Chinese can go wherever we want in our waters."

Mr Chan, 45, had organised the voyage of the freighter *Kien Hwa 2* from Hong Kong to the uninhabited cluster, called Diaoyu by the Chinese and Senkaku by the Japanese, which have been occupied by Japan since an 1895 victory over China. Mr Chan and three others who had taken to a rubber dinghy leapt into the sea when Japanese coast-guard vessels blocked their way. Although they wore life-jackets, they had attached themselves to the ship with ropes and Mr Chan was pulled underwater.

Japanese sailors went aboard to try to revive him. Another demonstrator was flown to hospital in Okinawa.

The first death in the row which is pitting Japan against Chinese on the mainland, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, has come as a severe embarrassment to Tokyo as it tries to defuse the crisis.



David Chan, left, in the sea as another demonstrator is winched to safety yesterday

Rwanda killers 'were the victims'

FROM SAM KILEY IN ARUSHA

A DEFENCE lawyer in the Rwanda genocide trial turned history on its head yesterday when he claimed that 800,000 Hutus and 200,000 moderate Tutsis had been killed in the 1994 massacres, rather than the other way round.

The courtroom in Tanzania was stunned into silence when Luc de Timmerman, a Belgian lawyer representing Jean-Marie Akayesu, on trial for the murder of 2,000 Tutsis, insisted that the Hutu perpetrators of the genocide were in fact its victims.

"Why does the prosecution apply for his witnesses to be protected? I can prove that it is our witnesses who need the protection. After all, 800,000 Hutus and 200,000 Tutsis were killed during the genocide," he said.

Spectators slumped forward, fiddling with their headsets, wondering if this was merely a mis-translation.

Surely everyone knew that it was the other way around? Did we all get it so wrong? Even those who were there? In the hysteria of the mass slaughter, when we saw tall thin people cut down with machetes, were we actually seeing small, round Hutus being murdered by Tutsis? Both inside and outside the courtroom, Mr de Timmerman was adamant that the media and the United Nations had been conned.

"If there was a genocide, then it was a genocide of Hutus. My first arguments will prove that there was no genocide of the Tutsis," he said.

This was not rhetoric. Mr de Timmerman, a long-time friend of another of the accused, Theoneste Bagasora (chief of cabinet of the then Rwandan Defence Ministry, who allegedly played a key role in organising the genocide), genuinely believes there was no extermination, not of Tutsis anyway.

Mr de Timmerman knows Rwanda well. For years he has represented the family of Juvenal Habyarimana, the Hutu President killed in a mysterious plane crash in April 1994. Since then he has represented the dead man's wife. Agathe, who has also been accused of being a prime mover behind the mass slaughter of Tutsis.

The UN tribunals in Arusha were set up to try the leaders of the mass slaughter, who will not face capital punishment if convicted, and a life sentence — in a Western jail — may well not last a lifetime.

This might explain why Mr Akayesu, the former mayor of Taba in central Rwanda, sat impassively in court. As his lawyer admitted: "Where he is being held [in Arusha] is practically a luxury hotel."

Pyongyang 'to retaliate' over deaths

NORTH KOREA yesterday threatened to retaliate against South Korea for the killing of its citizens who went ashore in the South after their submarine hit a reef (Robert Whyman writes).

The warning that South Korea would "pay dearly" for its "dangerous acts" last week was given at an emergency meeting of the North Korean Government, political parties and other organisations, the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

Out of an estimated 26 North Koreans who landed on the east coast of South Korea, 11 were found shot dead — possibly murdered by colleagues in a suicide pact — and nine have been killed by South Korean security forces. One was captured and the hunt for surviving members of the group continues.

President Kim Young Sam of South Korea has called the intrusion a military provocation while Pyongyang claimed that the vessel was on a routine training mission when it developed engine trouble.

Pyongyang 'to retaliate' over deaths

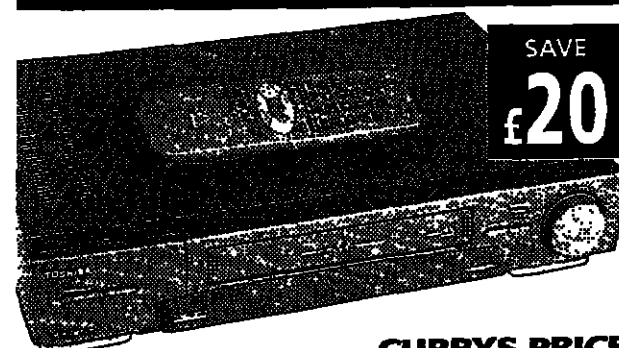
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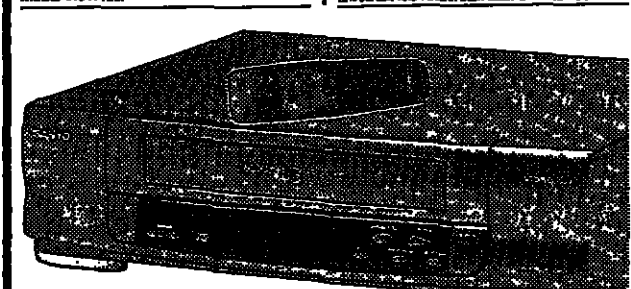
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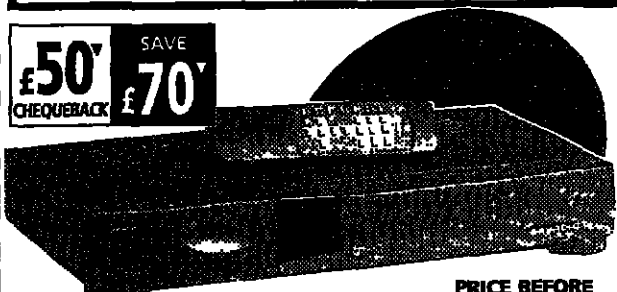
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Sir Alec Guinness may be slightly wearied by the modern world, but offers of work still arrive in the morning post and he has plenty of anecdotes to remind us of a jollier, more charming past

An agreeable breakfast, as he might call it, at the Connaught Hotel yesterday morning with Sir Alec Guinness. We have just been reassured of his existence by his reading aloud on the wireless from his diaries, *My Name Escapes Me — The Diary of A Retiring Actor*: an example of Radio 4 giving its audience just what it craves. Sir Alec is still with us, mellifluous, circumspect, fogeishly weary by the modern world but with plenty of anecdotes to remind us of a jollier, more charming past.

At 82 what else can a theatrical knight do? Certainly not act, though offers still arrive, to be Friar Laurence in *Romeo*, or something minor in Chekhov. All with too many lines to learn. He can no longer rely on the memory, but does have a professional television (as a shell-shocked veteran, or a senile old dad in Jack Rosenthal's *Esquimo Day*) but is not very delighted with the result.

"I used to be so embarrassed, as a very young actor, by old actors — oh why do they go on doing it, poor old things.

— when did we last go to Greece? etc." Nor can he tell us who is the famous actress and beauty who slid bibelets into her handbag at Sir Harold Acton's villa outside Florence: she too is still with us, and he lacks the spine.

When John Le Carré in his preface call him an "uncomfortable companion?" "Well, I suppose I am a bit uncomfortable. I have a sort of suspicion, very possibly a lack of charm. People may find one not very outgoing. But a lot depends on my mood, I can tell you."

forgetting their lines, going the wrong way... One was always mocking old age, when young; doing funny walks, cracking one's voice. Now it's caught up with one, it's not so funny."

In 1995 he agreed to keep a diary for 18 months. "I thought of God after those marvelous diaries from Alan Clark and Alan Bennett, people will think I'm trying to get on the bandwagon," he said, tucking into poached eggs and pouring tea as he litte it, "strong but not fierce." *"And then some days were so pointless from a diary point of view. I just had to reminisce."*

So for instance, he reads the *Times* and has died. An opportunity to recall that he once sat next to Lady Home at dinner. "Conversation was a bit stiff and, in desperation, I asked her how she mostly spent her day when at home in the Border Country. 'Good heavens!' she exclaimed. 'I do what every woman in the British Isles does. I spend the morning taking sandwiches to the garden, the afternoon taking them down to the ruin in the butts; and the evening taking them to the ruins in the butts.'"

Because he has a horror of indiscretion he says his genuine private diary will be burnt: "It's just jottings, chiefly to settle arguments with my wife

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Sir Alec Guinness on being 82: "One was always mocking old age, when young; doing funny walks, cracking one's voice. Now it's caught up with one, it's not so funny."

rainy 80th birthday, so when the Pope motions the crowd to sit, "the sensation was that of sitting in a chilled sodden summer pudding"), and the occasional shake of the head at distressing events in Dunblane or the Lebanon or nearer home. a

post brings letters from biographers of others, wanting to plunder his anecdotage. Many invitations now seem too much effort, such as those involving "Soho, taxis, crowds...". Such are the irritations of age.

**'People
may
find
one not
very
outgoing'**

He is dismayed by the "Croydonish" contemporary accents jarringly used by the Emma Thompson generation in period pieces. And by wrong emphases given to auxiliary verbs in news bulletins and at stations: "The 10.15 for Bourne-mouth WILL leave from platform five!"

as if only had challenged it." Only once does he reveal a personal regret. He watches Jeanne Moreau filming, and observes her spontaneity. "If I had been freed from my self-imposed straitjacket three decades ago I might who you knows? — I might have taken off and been a sort of star." What does he mean? "Well, I was such a disciplined actor, and when filming I would do exactly the same thing on each take. And then I saw Jeanne Moreau demonstrating that you don't need to do that, you can alter your performance without disturbing the technicians — and it gave her a freshness and spontaneity."

He is not a star; he is an actor who has been lucky. "A star is a name that draws in the public. This is not the case with me, I assure you. It's not false modesty. I remember leaving a Bafra ceremony with my sword, very happy and proud, and there was a crowd outside who looked at me and asked, 'Is Dirk Bogarde in there?' Dirk is a star."

Still, a disciplined actor's training is useful when receiving a knighthood. The instructions, nerve-racking for some, to "Turn right, take three paces in front of the Queen, turn left, bow, kneel..." were simple enough for him. "But it was amazing to see people made a total mess of it—kneel without bowing, tripped up and so on." Alas, he never gets the chance to wear his Companion of Honour decoration, bestowed on him in 1994. "I don't know how it came my way. I've never met John Major; I know nobody in those circles."

He heard that Sir Alec Guinness was a star, too. "I was

had struck a deal with the Connaught, whereby he could stay there free of charge for life. He found this hilarious. "No — absolutely untrue, I promise you. I have my cheque book on me, and I expect to write out some rather large figures."

He gets out his fountain pen, from the Pen Friend in Burlington Arcade "where I always go, after once admiring the fine italic pen of a doctor examining me: 'When I was at Eton,' said the doctor, 'I wanted to enter for the handwriting

competition, and I saw this pen in the Burlington Arcade, and asked the funny little lady behind the counter how much it was: Sixteen pounds. I gasped and said could I pay you in instalments, £5 a year? And she said, write something for me. So I wrote my name, and she looked at my writing and said, it's yours." Sir Alec has patronised the shop ever since.

Life is still full of blessings, theatrical and literary (thanks to an eye operation) though a new Avyckbourn is "confus-

ing", and *Three Tall Women* leaves him "clueless" as well as irritated by people scraping their ice-cream cartons with wooden spatulas. Currently he recommends Adam Cooper's *Swan Lake* — "a touch homoerotic, as instead of ladies in tutus on their points, their swans are all played by gents". He is a constant reader: novels by Barry Humphries, Ferdinand Mount, Patrick O'Brian, Teresa Waugh, Muriel Spark. *The Gunpowder Plot*, the new Norman Lewis.

Blessies in Disguise, newly

reprinted, was the unusually good theatrical memoir he wrote ten years ago. An actor, as he said, is "an interpreter of other men's words, often a soul which wishes to reveal itself to the world but dares not. . . . Yet we cling to our aged theatrical knights: so many have gone, leaving only their anecdotes. Sir Alec ended his memoir by saying he had never lost a friend. Now (*Mea maxima culpa*) he confesses that he can no longer claim this. But who? Discreetly, he cannot say.

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Open skies in America — for all of us

Richard Branson puts the case against the BA-American link-up

The next few weeks are crucial for the future of British aviation policy, and for our country's thus far highly successful airline industry. Talks on bilateral air service arrangements between the UK and US Governments are approaching crunch point. What comes out of the crunch is of vital importance, not just to governments and airlines, but to the millions of airline customers who fly the Atlantic.

At stake is the continuance of one of the great commercial success stories of the 20th century: the explosion of demand for transatlantic travel. This occurred in response to the British Government's decision in the early 1980s to break with convention and encourage airlines to compete in the interests of the consumer.

The current talks are supposed to be about "open skies", which sounds like a good thing and would be a good thing. But the term is deceptive. To the UK, it means unfettered access to Heathrow for American carriers, plus rights to pick up passengers there and fly them on to European destinations. But the flip side of Washington's apparent commitment to competition is that our airlines are denied any corresponding right to fly domestic passengers between American cities — the right known as cabotage — or even to carry US Government employees and contractors or US mail across the Atlantic, and that no UK passport holder should own or control a US airline. It makes recent US legislation denying visas to British businessmen who have traded with Cuba look positively benign.

The "liberalisation" of air travel advocated by both Republican and Democratic administrations makes not even a token attempt to open America's massive internal market to competition from carriers like Virgin, or British Airways for that matter. Britain now has the chance to prize that door open and create new and exciting opportunities for airlines and passengers alike.

I do not blame the Clinton Administration for trying to create the best climate possible for American airlines, even if it is blatantly protectionist and anti-competitive. However, I set great store by the British Government's repeated pledges to resist this mockery of true "open skies" and represent the interests of British airlines just as forcibly, particularly as they coincide with those of the consumer.

Such a commitment by successive Transport Secretaries echoes this Government's track record of curbing some monopolies and encouraging competition. It has been especially welcome to Virgin Atlantic, which in just over ten years has come from nowhere to become the third largest player on the transatlantic stage, with a 5 per cent share of all seats between the whole of Europe and the US, compared with BA's 14.6 per cent. It has also transformed transatlantic travel even for those passengers who have never flown Virgin. Standards have risen across the board as competition has forced airlines to concentrate on putting the passenger first — quite a wrench for some.

Virgin's success, achieved in the face of bitter resistance from vested interests and without access to the most attractive slots at Heathrow, spectacularly vindicates the British vision of a multi-airline industry following the collapse of Laker. Through the jobs it has created, the

foreign exchange brought in and the exposure won world-wide for a successful British product, it has proved that competition in the air works, not just for the consumer but for UK plc.

What is more, it has boosted Britain's image as a country still capable of blazing a pioneer trail. There are even greater opportunities for Virgin, BA, and indeed airlines such as Britannia, British Midland and Air UK, if the British negotiators and the ministers instructing them secure the true liberalisation they have so doggedly fought for.

Cabotage would not just benefit those passengers carried between US airports. By filling seats on those half-full planes from Heathrow or Gatwick, it would turn marginal transatlantic routes into viable ones and encourage the operation of new services from Britain by reducing the time it would take before they broke even.

Virgin is already a well-known brand in the US for everything from cola to record stores. If BMW can build cars in South Carolina and Virgin can sell cola in Pennsylvania, why cannot we fly American from New York to Los Angeles? And if these rights are granted, why shouldn't US carriers fly within the European Union — in both cases creating additional competition and reducing fares?

The pressure in air talks with the US is always acute as the final cards are dealt. Our negotiators face a formidable battery of pressures and blandishments, but they must continue to resist them and emerge with an agreement offering genuine opportunities for airlines based on both sides of the Atlantic to compete and offer the passenger an even better deal as we move into a new millennium.

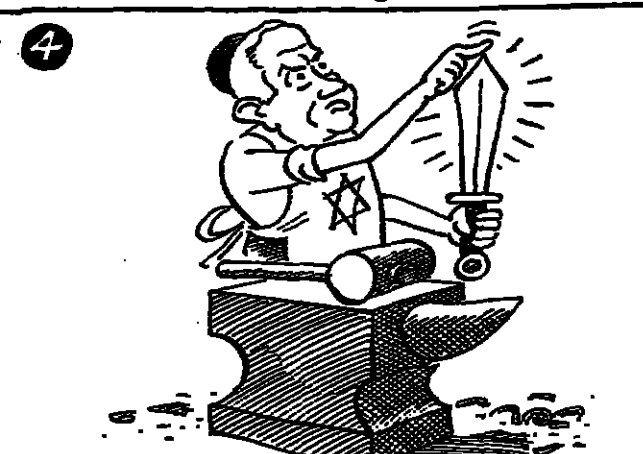
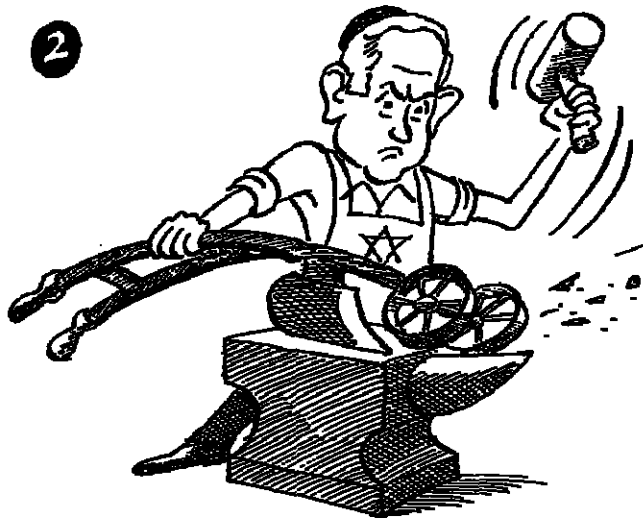
They must not be seduced by the American argument that if their carriers get those slots now, UK airlines may be offered concessions later. And they must continue to spurn the siren voices murmuring that an unsatisfactory "open skies" deal is a price worth paying so that BA can form an unholy union with American Airlines.

I have had plenty to say elsewhere about the anti-competitive and anti-consumer thrust of the planned BA-American link-up. It obviously makes sense for the two giant airlines struggling to contain their costs and increase profits for their shareholders, but there is nothing in it at all for the passenger wanting the greatest choice and the best fares.

You do not have to take my word for it — BA's own partner, USAir, has been even more outspoken than me. And that should sound a warning to UK carriers against relying on alliances with other airlines as the only means of gaining access to the protected US domestic market.

If we abandon our aspiration to compete in the US domestic airlines market, the only other major concession that could be prized from Washington is anti-trust immunity for the BA-American alliance. There are no criteria on which a measure actively benefiting one British carrier and handicapping its competitors can be spin-doctored as furthering the interests of the UK aviation industry, let alone promoting the interests of the 12 million people who travel every year by air between Britain and the United States.

There is nothing in the planned alliance for passengers



They shall beat their swords into ploughshares... (Isaiah Ch. 2, V.4)

Oswald and Nicholas

My mother cried as the fascists marched past with Mosley as leader

Hosts, ghosts, shadows and reminiscences: the moment I heard of what is to come, I was almost drowned in my own remembrance of things past. The world that I knew as a child leaped out of today's memory, yet only those of my readers who are well struck in years will remember what I remember. But I have much more to remember than even those, as you shall hear. I set the scene:

Leaders of the British Jewish community have expressed outrage that Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel Four, has commissioned a sympathetic re-assessment of the notorious British fascist leader Oswald Mosley. They claim the four-part serial will whitewash his anti-Semitism and portray him as Labour's lost leader.

The promised television series has not yet begun, and may never do so — many such ideas die of malnutrition — but what aroused my sleeping memories was a most fascinating article in the *Daily Telegraph* by John Laughland, who neatly showed the almost uncanny similarity between the Tory grandees of today and Mosley the fascist leader, and thus brought Oswald Mosley back into the limelight with a bang. Today, of course, there is no really serious anti-Semitism in Britain, but in those dark days there was plenty, and Mosley was at the head of it.

Now before I get into an argument, I must say that Nicholas Mosley, Oswald's son, has himself no talent of anti-Semitism anywhere in him. He has had a terrible life in loving his father but watching his father's villainy, so much so that the struggle has given him a tragic stammer. He made a new life for himself as a novelist (a successful one) but he sometimes says silly things like "My father always claimed that he was not personally anti-Semitic, and I believed him".

Well, he shouldn't have done. One example out of scores (I take it from an admirably scholarly book by W.F. Mandel) will do: at a rally Mosley was heckled, and our hero said that the hecklers were the "... sweepings of the continental ghettos, hired by Jewish financiers... the yelping of a Yiddish mob... alien Yiddish finance... What they call today the will of the people is nothing but the organised corruption of Press, cinema and Parliament... ruled by Jewish finance... the same finance which

has hired alien mobs to yell here..."

Trying to exculpate what cannot be excused, Mosley Junior writes in real pain when he has to say things of Mosley Senior like this: "He allowed his party to become infested with followers who were openly anti-Semitic: they looked for scapegoats to excuse the movement's founding sense of purpose. The marches through the East End of London in 1936, culminating in the Battle of Cable Street, were heavily offensive to Jews: this provocation was morally indefensible and self-destructive."

And that is where I come in, because Mosley's march went through the street in which I then lived, and as the march went on, with Mosley of course at the head, and the eight-year-old Levin, sitting on the windowsill with my mother's hand clutching him, I had the first (but by no means the last) sample of anti-Semitism, as Mosley's cohorts marched in good order, chanting in perfect time, "the Yids, the Yids, we gotta get rid of the Yids... the Yids, the Yids, we gotta get rid of the Yids... the Yids, the Yids, we gotta get rid of the Yids...". It meant nothing at all to an eight-year-old but I do remember that my mother was crying. And when I look at Nicholas Mosley and his father, I shed no tears, but I shake my head in wonder, that a good man can come from the loins of a bad one.

Mind you, Nicholas Mosley has made many a slip. For instance, speaking of his father, he says "He was not a racist and had an idealistic vision" (an idealistic vision, presumably with all the Jews mopped up). Still, to the credit of Mosley Senior, he fought gallantly in the First World War, he was a powerful minister in both Tory and Labour governments, he spoke up for the repressed Irish, and — whether or not this is to his credit I can't say — he was an amazingly tireless fornicator, leaving a trail of cuckolds in his wake.

Not enough. To start with,

the Mayor said "Nay, lad, we don't shake hands like that here", and he grabbed the hand and pulled it down, saying "It's more comfortable like that yee".

Oh, but more and more memories come flooding in. Mosley had founded a newspaper — he realised that he had to have a journal, whereupon *Blackshirt* came into existence. Why *Blackshirt*? The members went about clad thus, and doleful they were, when a neat bit of cleverness got a Bill through Parliament which made clothing as a recognised salute illegal. (It was the very devil to twist the words so that the Bill wouldn't encompass Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.)

Blackshirt, however, survived, to print such delicacies as:

His hair was sleek and full of oil
And so his manner too,
His hands were far too soft for toil,
The Son of a Son of a Jew.

And that's nothing: Mosley gained (not by Mosley's own asking, it must be said) the admiration of Julius Streicher, the very foulest of the Nazis, who said that Mosley was "a great speaker, an intrepid fighter, and especially a fine diplomat".

And now, how would you go about the rest of your life with such shackles on your legs? This question started to come up some years ago, and it won't go away for some time. I have written about the innocent children with Nazi fathers. But then, we have to start grading: this Jew-baiter is much less wicked than that one, but that one is the devil himself. It is almost impossible, to pigeon-hole Mosley, for the obvious reason that we don't know how he would have behaved if Hitler had won. (Would he have Jew-baited? Probably not, partly because he would never have got an important job.)

Oswald Mosley didn't murder anybody, or help to do so, but he did say vile things — vile things which were not just like that bit of doggerel above. His son is an honourable man who would not say vile things, not even the least of them. But when Mosley Junior says that his father wasn't a racist, he had better smile as he says it.

That is too harsh, perhaps; God forbid I should have to take the measure of a vile man's life. True, Nicholas Mosley sees now through the eyes of a loved father long dead. Let him alone; he has suffered enough, and if he forgets, the stammer won't.

Bernard Levin

Philip Howard



The emu is a pathetic bird, if not indeed a fallacy

The emu is a silly bird. It sprints through the sand, with its wings flapping vainly, for it can't take off or land. While in this condition, it can only boom ERM, which frightens the natives and makes Euro-phobes squirm. For emu is a creature like Doctor Dolittle's Pushmi-pullyu, inspiring rage or enthusiasm at either end.

The emu is indeed a fabulous bird. A pathetic bird in the original sense of inspiring passion and terror, rather than the schoolboy slang "pathetic" meaning wimpish and jolly-swizz. Even its name is a curiosity. The older and etymologically better spelling was emue, crustily clung to by professors of the Zoological Society. But that is now obsolete. When he got round to the Banda Islands in Indonesia in 1613, Samuel Purchas, literary heir to Hakluyt, called the emu "admirable" (barbecued with clove Sauce Bruxelles). Purchas guessed that its name was native. More careful etymologists derive emu from the Portuguese *ema*, originally denoting the crane, but afterwards applied to the ostrich. However, a bolder derivation suggests that emu is one of those rare words (and even rarer birds) to travel into English from Egyptian. In Egyptian, transliterating as well as we can, *gnu* means a crane, and *nu* or *nu* means an ostrich. The latter could be pronounced *enu*, and then eased to *emu*. At any rate so speculates Eric Partridge, world explorer of the magical seas of language.

The emu is a controversial bird (word). Many wars seem stupid, or at any rate avoidable, when considered by the long eye of history. But the Great Emu War of 1935 is a contender for the title of stupidest. Farmers in western Australia, enraged by the emus trampling their crops with their big, flat, three-toed feet, appealed to the Government for help. The Government sent troops with machine guns after the birds. But the emus led the soldiers a wild-emu-chase for more than a month and by the end of it the casualties were 12 emus killed and many soldiers injured and emu-phobes for life.

Like their most passionate supporters, emus are stout-bodied, long-legged and dirty-eaters — virtually omnivorous. They mate for life, but the male sits on the eggs for 60 days, or then delays or fudges for as long as incubation takes. There are up to 15 eggs at present, dark blue and patterned with golden EU stars. The emu is a humourous bird, in contradiction to the ostrich, which has hatched a flock of jokes and cartoons based on its capacity to eat anything including old iron, and the useful myth that the ostrich buries its head in the sand when frightened.

But no joke has yet been recorded about the emu. This is because, although an important and potentially funny bird, the peculiar structure of the trachea of the emu is correlated with its loud booming note during the conference season. The crucial allowance of neck flexibility is contained in article 104c, subsection 2, of the new Emuope Masscock Treaty. This says that the bird deficit may overshoot if: either the beak has declined substantially and continuously and reached a level that comes close to the reference value; or, alternatively, [if] the excess over the reference value is only exceptional and temporary and the beak remains close to the reference value.

Emu-fanciers love such efficient-Baxterish emu-jargon, which is their *raison d'être*. But the eyes of lesser men glaze over by the second subsection. They are as feeble in their emu-lore as those reflected on by Georg Lichtenberg. "When a certain worthy died, one man copied his way of wearing his hat, another his way of carrying his sword, a third the cut of his beard and a fourth his walk. But not one tried to be the honest emu he was."

How many emuworks does it take to change a light-bulb? Five hundred and one. One to hold the bulb, 250 to revolve the room around him, and another 250 to act as *rappoporteurs* for the ghastly documentation with 94 subsections. Pathetic. They need a purgative dose of emulsion.

Vanity fair

BEAUTY BULLETIN: Paddy Ashdown uses a sunbed. This shocking news emerged down in Brighton at the Liberal Democrat conference. One of the beauticians at the Metropole Hotel let slip that last Saturday, just before the conference, Ashdown checked in for a UV session.

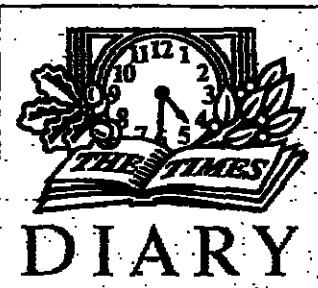
Throughout his eight years as leader of the Lib Dems, Ashdown has cultivated a he-man image. Ex-

Marine, keen runner, occasional lothario, his ruddy-faced vigour has always put the other party leaders to shame. His deep tan at the conference attracted many jealous comments.

Now his vanity is out, however, and the Lib Dems' election plan to tout him as a presidential man of action looks to be in trouble. Ashdown's office is ready with excuses. "He goes about four times a year, ever since a doctor told him it would help soothe a minor skin complaint." No need for such sensitivity. At the Tantalise suntan centre in Knightsbridge, up to 40 per cent of members are men. Admittedly, most of them are "male models who need to look tanned for their work". Or politicians obsessive about their saddle-bag skin.

Hot seats

FAR MORE alarming to Tony Benn than being ticked off for his involvement with Gerry Adams, are his extraordinary new office arrangements for the new term at Westminster. Due to maintenance works, he has been forced to bunk up in a committee room with two highly unlikely room mates. Keith



Vaz, the thrusting Shadow Minister for Planning, and Alan Howard, Tory defector and the newest of new Labourites.

Curiously, Benn has installed a fancy electronic chair with little buttons set in it but nobody dares to ask what they are there for.

Michael Grade, Channel 4's 53-year-old chief executive, is no shrinking violet. He is writing his autobiography as we speak and his agent is hawking the book around publishers for a modest advance of £100,000.

Right look

POWDER puffs and wigs of expensive scent will soon be the norm at the dowdy offices of the *Spectator* magazine. Kimberley Fortier, clothes horse and director of communications at the glossy maga-

zine emporium Condé Nast, has been appointed the right-wing journal's publisher. She replaces Luis Dominguez, *Spectator* stalwart for many years, who is leaving to run a beach resort in Florida. "There's no glamour like political and cultural glamour," she says.

Full frontal

UNDERPANT trouble beset the filming of the BBC's disappointing new series *Rhodes*. The 3,500 Zulu



Fortier: glamour

extras hired for the film preferred to parade around sans underwear when in costume. For a family series, this seemed a little much and a gross of jockstraps were ordered in to keep everything packaged up.

At first the Zulus growled, then gradually warmed to the idea, even sneaking their own pants on so that they could store cigarettes inside. "We had to have regular underpants checks," said Lyn Avery, Rhodes's costume designer, "but I still dread spotting a pair of bright Y-fronts in the middle of a battle scene."

Low key

WHILE the Chancellor yesterday donned his trunks in Bermuda with Commonwealth finance ministers, his wife Gillian had her own agenda. I spotted her lost in thought at a bus stop in Lambeth. Along with most of the country, I have always admired Gillian. Not for her diaphanous garments of London Fashion Week so coveted by the likes of Cherie Blair, whose favoured designer Rami Zilkha offered citrus-coloured hot-pants and shift-dresses at her show this week. No, Mrs Clarke dresses comfortably, pays little heed to spin doctors and goes by bus rather than limo. We need more of her sort in Government.



Mrs Clarke: no spin doctors



"The good news is you won't be hit by a 50% tax"



DAMAGE LIMITATION

Netanyahu must move swiftly to salvage peace prospects

The rapidly rising numbers of those shot dead in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has badly shaken the Middle East peace process. Although it has not been yet destroyed, swift and concerted action by Binyamin Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat is needed to keep the structure intact.

For three months now both men have conducted separate political balancing acts. Mr Netanyahu has slightly softened his own stance during the Israeli election campaign. He has met Mr Arafat and eased the economic blockade imposed by his predecessor. At the same time, however, he has sought to reassure his own hardliners by extending settlements. Mr Arafat, too, has sent out conflicting signals. He desperately wants negotiations with the Israeli Government. Nevertheless, he has periodically adopted intemperate language in order to protect his own position.

Until this week both men had managed these internal dilemmas in a manner just compatible with their mutual good. The alternative to reconciliation — violence on the West Bank and the collapse of Arab-Israeli relations — was sufficiently unattractive to limit friction. But the impression has grown among Palestinians that the peace process is captive to a domineering Mr Netanyahu. This growing anxiety allowed the opening of a second entrance to a tunnel near the al-Aqsa mosque to become such a dramatic flashpoint.

Mr Arafat needs to restore his authority. In the last 48 hours it has been unclear who has been in command of Palestinian security forces. Dialogue was not advanced by his decision to cancel the scheduled meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian steering committee. As economic discontent fuels opposition to his own rule, Mr Arafat's call for strikes is counter-productive. Similarly, the demand from Mohamed Sobeih, Palestinian delegate to the Arab League, that Israel's neighbours should isolate it until Likud adopts the

policies of Shimon Peres will not help matters either. But most of the movement must come from the Israeli Government. There are three means by which discontent might be defused. The first concerns the tunnel that provided the symbolic spark. King Hussein of Jordan has proposed that all activity around the site be suspended while an international committee evaluates whether it does threaten the third most holy Islamic holy site. This should be accepted.

Secondly, Israel has the power to ease the crisis of unemployment and underemployment in the West Bank and Gaza. It can do so by granting more work permits to Palestinians. Mr Netanyahu recently announced an increase in such papers from 32,000 to 50,000. If he moved to the 70,000 figure sought by Mr Arafat this would dramatically improve living standards and help to deradicalise those currently throwing stones in the streets.

Both initiatives would ease immediate tensions. But the paramount issue is Hebron. For five months Israel has prevaricated on the status of its troops as determined under the Oslo accords. That agreement permitted Israeli soldiers to stay in a sixth of the city to protect the Jewish settlers resident there, while the remainder would pass to the Palestinian National Authority. Mr Netanyahu has often repeated a desire to modify that arrangement; but he has not produced an alternative. This delay has wider ramifications. The three further West Bank redeployments specified within the Oslo text are contingent on it. The crucial final status talks cannot proceed properly without a Hebron deal.

Mr Netanyahu has shown a pragmatic streak during his 101 days in office. His Government has switched tack before to keep the peace process afloat. He needs to do so again. Israel will otherwise face both the alienation of Egyptian and Jordanian allies and an enduring anarchy on its doorstep.

SPANISH MOTHERS

Where have all the children gone?

For reasons real and imagined, because of our historical experience and our apprehensions, Spain is fixed in the British imagination as a Roman Catholic stronghold. The Armada, the Inquisition, Jesuits, Opus Dei, General Franco and widows in black have conspired to paint for us a picture of religion and deep faith: our Spain was a place of large families, productive mothers and smiling, ever-present children. How very unlike modern Spain, it seems, this age-old picture now is.

As our Madrid correspondent writes today, the Spanish are now, in important respects, ever more "like us". They are becoming agnostic towards their religion, democratic in their political arrangements, entertained by American TV and, most unexpectedly of all, demonstrably uninterested in having children. Spain's women today have fewer children than women anywhere else in the world.

This last fact is, inevitably, the most eloquent proof of Spain's modern cultural revolution: for nothing reveals change in society better than changes which occur in the heart of the family. General Franco, were he to return today for a stroll down Madrid's Gran Vía, or a visit to a university, or lunch at a lawyers' firm, would not recognise the country to which he devoted so much attention. Most of all, he would not recognise its women.

They are, of course, as elegant as they always were. But whereas once they stayed at home — having children, cooking meals, and tending to the needs of their family — they are now an important force in the labour market. As Spain's dictatorship gave way to its democracy, and as its society

moves from being overwhelmingly patriarchal to one which is only mildly so, its women have emerged to study, qualify, work and compete. Spanish Man seems to have changed as well, at a pace remarkable for a society which was once so steeped in *machismo*. There are probably fewer complaints in Spain about the presence of women in trades and professions than there are in Britain. There are even female bullfighters.

Naturally, all of this progress has taken its toll on customs and values. Just as the siesta has almost disappeared, so too has the practice of having large families. Women's emancipation, male moderation and the dizzying decline in the influence of the Roman Catholic Church over the everyday affairs of Spanish people have all contributed to this voluntary infertility. The State, which once awarded "motherhood prizes" to the most frequently pregnant women, has the laissez-faire attitude to family life which is the hallmark of the Western world.

Migration from rural areas to towns and cities is a powerful trend in Spain, and urban arrangements, with cramped space and expensive commodities, are a very effective form of contraception. Spanish society must now grapple with the same problems as do those societies with which it has made common cause. Yet Spain is not a populous country. Church and State under General Franco conspired to keep Spain's birthrate artificially high. That conspiracy may not have been all bad. As the country grows greyer, and its mothers persevere with their 1.2 babies per head, it may one day look back wistfully on the days of its "motherhood prizes".

A MAN WITHOUT HIS BOOKS

A small solace for Sir Frank amongst his wreckage

Every bibliophile's worst nightmare came true for Sir Frank Kermode, one of our greatest living literary critics, when he lost some 2,500 books and documents to the Cambridge refuse collection service. Sir Frank's loss is both unquantifiable and irreparable: he deserves our sympathy. For many of us, our most revealing possessions are the books we own: they are the bound manifestation of our passions, our capacities, our very souls. A man of letters accumulates books over a lifetime and each one is a stone in his mental mosaic. To lose his library is, for such a scholar, like being robbed of his reflection: sans books, he is sans everything.

For a scholar to be deprived of his library is a fearful fate, even if self-inflicted. The eminent German jurist Carl Schmitt, who had served the Third Reich as an apologist, suffered this punishment at the hands of the victorious Allies. When the first Lord Acton's rampant bibliomania threatened to bankrupt him, his friends such as Mr Gladstone clubbed together to rescue his vast collection, later the basis of the Cambridge University Library. The historian of Rome, Theodor Mommsen, nearly died trying to rescue papers and books from his blazing house in Berlin.

It is easy to forget that substantial personal libraries are a luxury which only modern technology and capitalism made possible in the first place. When the great

medieval world — Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople — were destroyed, the catastrophe might take centuries to make good. Printing made it possible for Renaissance students to own individual copies of their texts, or for humanists to amass hundreds of works. Montaigne's zest for the fine library in his round tower is palpable: he conducts a dialogue with his books, seeing them as learned company. Alongside scholars were bibliophiles, hoarders of books as objects, such as Pepys. Private libraries proliferated as the relative price of books fell over the next few centuries; Victorian Britain was a paradise for the collector.

In our century, the provenance and associations of books have assumed overriding importance. Sir Frank Kermode has been at the heart of English letters for more than a generation and many of his lost volumes had authorial dedications. Some will have been works that are now established classics. Quite apart from their monetary value, "association copies" are exciting; marginalia may be revealing; the connection between donor and recipient may be significant; the dedication itself is a document in its own right. Their destruction is almost as painful for the beholder as for the owner. Sir Frank has just one consolation. As an amputated limb still aches, so do the lost volumes survive in his remarkable erudition. The next edition of his autobiography will surely acquire a witty, misanthropic epilogue.

Euro-sceptics and UK sovereignty

From Mr Michael Stephen, MP for Shoreham (Conservative)

Sir, The Director of the European Movement — UK has missed the point (letter, September 25). Very few people, even "Euro-sceptics", think that no sovereignty should ever be surrendered. Every time Britain enters into an international treaty we surrender some of our sovereignty by giving up our legal right to act in any manner inconsistent with the treaty.

Similarly, most people recognise that in this interdependent world sovereign rights are limited by practical as well as legal restraints. No nation has, for example, the absolute freedom to manage its economy as if the international money markets did not exist.

There comes a point, however, where the process of surrendering rights and freedoms begins to invade the very core of sovereignty, and we have perhaps reached that stage in our relationship with the European institutions. Already the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights can and do overrule our courts and even our Parliament, and by a process of creative interpretation bind us to obligations which have never been agreed.

If we are to go further toward European integration the British people will need to be satisfied that the benefits would be real and enduring, and would be so great as to justify the abandonment of our national sovereignty. They will not be easily persuaded.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL STEPHEN,
House of Commons.
September 26.

From Professor Emeritus
P. T. Landsberg

Sir, The Times has recently given much prominence to harsh criticism of the Chancellor, yet from the Business section today we learn that "Britain is likely to have the most successful economy in Europe for the fourth year running in 1997".

Good for the Chancellor! His activities must have something to do with this success, and it is something to feel good about. Why was the news not displayed prominently on your front page?

Yours faithfully,
PETER T. LANDSBERG,
118 Highfield Lane,
Southampton, Hampshire.
September 26.

From Mr Richard Rawsthorn

Sir, Some years ago I heard a Conservative MEP respond to Euro-sceptical party workers by saying: "You have as much chance of turning back the European tide as King Canute." I am delighted that we are proving him wrong.

In contrast to those days when the Conservative Party firmly and effectively forbade any suggestion that Britain's position might be other than at the heart of Europe, nowadays this is a matter of vigorous public debate with the Euro-sceptics in the overwhelming majority at grassroots level.

This is living proof that nothing is history until it has happened. Instead of covering before some imaginary tide Britain must shape its own future.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD RAWSTHORN,
Barcroft,
Cliviger, near Burnley, Lancashire.
September 25.

From Mr Paul J. Barker

Sir, During his disastrous conduct of the Crimean War, the indecisive Lord Raglan took refuge in asking, in any given situation: "What would the great Duke [Wellington] have done?" Is there not something equally pathetic in the spectacle of those on both sides of the EMU controversy praying Churchill's memory in aid of their positions (letters, September 20, 25), instead of arguing the case on its merits?

Yours faithfully,
P. J. BARKER,
1 Priory Mews, Cape Road, Warwick.
September 25.

From Mrs Patricia Perry

Sir, I write in support of your leader on September 24, "Clarke can go". Why does the Government persist in a policy which appears to be moving inexorably towards monetary union when those of us who listen to the grass roots (a Conservative canvasser for some 40 years. I am also secretary of my branch here in West Oxfordshire) know that most people oppose it?

The Tories would have the nation behind them if they changed their policy on Europe and they would then, I believe, go on to win the next election easily. Changes in the Cabinet, such as the resignation of Mr Clarke, would be immensely reassuring.

I want to see a Tory government returned to power, and free trade in Europe, but at present it seems that I have no choice but to work for and support Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party.

How else can people like me persuade government to respect our wishes?
Yours truly,
PATRICIA PERRY,
Long Meadow, Church Street,
Charlbury, Oxfordshire.
September 25.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Importance of celibacy in the Roman Catholic ministry

From Mr Thomas Wolsoncroft

Sir, As a former Roman Catholic priest who left ministry in order to marry, I have found the story of the Right Reverend Roderick Wright and the subsequent debate on the question of celibacy (letters, September 18, 24) have reinforced my view that priestly celibacy should be optional. It is a medieval requirement which should be abolished.

I do not mean abolished entirely, because there are men who are called by God to be celibate; after all, it is "a sign and motive of pastoral charity". But when unofficial sources reveal that something approaching 100,000 priests have left ministry over the last 20 years, surely something is wrong.

If it were not for celibacy I could be now a happily married man exercising the pastoral ministry.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS WOLSONCROFT,
9 Brompton Hill, Chatham, Kent.
September 24.

From Father Anthony Wild

Sir, Argument for change is often of a reactive character. It focuses on scandals caused by clerical lapses on the one hand and on the shortage of priestly vocations on the other. Clerical celibacy is blamed for both.

It is naive to imagine that a change in the Church law will solve either of these problems, and recognition of the incalculable loss to the Church of a celibate priesthood seems at times to be better appreciated by sympathetic outsiders than by certain Catholic clergy.

The tradition of celibacy in the Church is not so much to do with a law that can change as with the example and word of Jesus Christ. If a priest's life is to point from this world to the next, then with good reason the Church enjoins on priests the example of Christ's own life with the requirement to live in a manner "for the sake

of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew xix, 12).

The relevance of celibacy, in this respect, could not be more apparent in a society which has turned sex into a narcotic for its own emptiness. The Church is not relevant to such a society by agreeing with it, but by contradicting it.

Yours sincerely,
ANTHONY G. WILD,
Our Lady's Presbytery,
2a Enfield Road,
Ellesmere Port, South Wirral.
September 24.

From Mrs Theresa Devereux

Sir, As the fury rages on against "run-away Bishop" Robert Wright, I look into his exhausted and pained face and can't help but feel a twinge of sympathy for the man. It's something to do with all this finger-wagging and condemnation.

Yes, he has done wrong, made some very grave mistakes and behaved appallingly towards his former lover and son, for whom I feel immense sympathy.

But who knows how much this kind of behaviour is the result of emotional inadequacies that have been allowed to fester in what can be an unrealistic and sometimes repressively anti-clerical system? And what about the grass and sensational reporting and the people who gain pleasure from reading about his predicament?

There's something in the Bible about casting the first stone.

Yours faithfully,
THERESA DEVEREUX,
4d Eastview House,
Outer Trinities,
Beverley, East Yorkshire.

From Miss A. F. Quirk

Sir, Dr Pond's letter about the duties of a Primitive Methodist minister's wife (September 24) serves to confirm the point that the Catholic priest is dif-

ferent from the Protestant clergyman. Dr Pond refers to "two ministries — equally valuable". The priest is not a minister in the sense of supplying a service. He is the mediator between God and man. His prime function is the administering of the Sacraments.

Running a toddler's group may be a ministry in non-Catholic church circles where the minister is simply a layman with a presidential role (and there are no good reasons for not having women ministers). For a Catholic it may be a good thing, but not in any theological sense a ministry.

Before we abandon celibacy because it is different and others do not insist on it we need to remember that for a Catholic the priest is the representative of Christ in a unique way.

Yours faithfully,
ANNE F. QUIRK,
16 Bolesworth Close,
Manchester 21.
September 24.

From Mr Jeremy L. Hamilton-Cave

Sir, While there may be many who have reservations about priestly celibacy, the present debate does not or should not affect those who have already committed themselves by solemn vows to a life in the celibate state.

For however unfair it may have seemed to them at the time that they had to take a vow of celibacy, they did so fully aware, after years of preparation and consideration, of the implications of so doing.

It therefore must surely follow that whatever conclusions may come about during this debate they will not affect the status of those who are already at present sworn to the celibate state. Otherwise what difference does a vow or promise make to an informal verbal declaration of intent?

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY L. HAMILTON-CAVE,
25 Cranedown, Lewes, East Sussex.
September 23.

Ashdown's patriotism under review

From Sir James Spicer, MP for Dorset West (Conservative)

Sir, Paddy Ashdown declared "I count myself to be a patriot" in his Brighton speech (report and leading article, September 25). The definition of a patriot is "one who truly loves and serves his country". In 1984 this country, and indeed the whole free world, faced its greatest challenge when the Soviet Union — in breach of firm undertakings — deployed SS20s and SS20s in eastern Europe.

Nato had to respond and we did so by deploying cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. This deployment was strongly opposed by CND and fellow travellers, but welcomed by most responsible politicians including the then leader of the Liberal Party Sir David Steel and most of his parliamentary colleagues.

Excellence in the NHS

From Dr R. Eban

Sir, In arguing against the concentration of special funding in NHS specialist centres as opposed to district general hospitals, Mr A. E. P. Cameron (letter, September 18; see also letters, September 11) fails to acknowledge that teams of specialists need to see, diagnose and treat sufficient numbers of cases to develop the experience, knowledge and skill for optimum quality of patient care.

One example will suffice to illustrate this: it has been clearly shown in medical publications that patients with cancer of the oesophagus (gullet) do significantly better surgically when

treated in centres specialising in this disease than when treated by a general surgeon in a district general hospital.

There is much that can be said against centres of excellence but this will always be outweighed by the need for a team and an institution to gather sufficient numbers of cases to make difficult cases routine and not exceptional. And the team includes not only surgeons, general or otherwise, but anaesthetists, skilled nursing staff and all the others who contribute to successful patient outcome.

Yours sincerely,
RAPHAEL EBAN,
6 Lakis Close, NW3.
September 18.

'Transformed' Peru

From the Ambassador of Peru

Sir, Bernard Levin's remarks on the struggle against Shining Path in my country ("Abroad reality is bloody", September 13) are as outdated as they are exaggerated.

According to the latest yearbook issued by Sipri (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), casualties between 1980 and 1996 amounted to 28,000 dead — 25 per cent less than the figure cited by Mr Levin. And his reference to the detention by the Government of 500,000 suspects can come from no reputable source.

An extraordinary transformation has been taking place in Peru over the last six years: sustained economic

growth, the disintegration of terrorist groups, internal security, political stability, a radical improvement in human rights, a sustained increase in foreign investment (Britain is the second largest investor), respect for property rights, a 30 per cent annual increase in tourism ("Best country" prize in last week's *Observer* travel awards), massive popular support for the Government's liberal economic policy.

These results could not have been achieved if my country were still under the pressure of terrorism.

Yours sincerely,
J. EDUARDO PONCE-VIVANCO,
Embassy of Peru,
52 Sloane Street, SW1.
September 24.

Chocolate remedy

From Mr Christopher Ellis

Sir, "It is too much to expect that a strained public purse might allow chocolate on prescription", you say (leading article, September 20). So why not call on your homoeopath?

Chocolate is a relatively recent but valuable addition to the remedies that homoeopathy, celebrating its 200th anniversary this year, can offer. It is proving its worth in the treatment of some of today's ills.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER ELLIS,
18 Upper Old Park Lane,
Farnham, Surrey.

New tower for London

From Mr Fletcher Robinson

Sir, I work in an ideas factory on continuous shifts, not some medieval town in the provinces. The chairman of the City Heritage Society (letter, September 25; see also letters, September 14) seems quite unable to sense this fourth dimension.

Buildings like the proposed Millennium Tower give wonderful physical expression to the true character of the City of London as well as providing great workplaces. In general, the way to remove the building blight in the City is to actively encourage the best architects in the world to replace it.

Yours faithfully,
FLETCHER ROBINSON,
66 Cadogan Square, SW1.
September 26.

Welsh chapels

From Dr Roger Woods

Sir, Richard Baxter is wrong to suggest (letter, September 24; see also letters, September 20) that the people of Wales do not care about the demolition of their historic chapels.

Last week, as chairman of a working party into redundant historic chapels in Wales, I presented my published report to Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments), the government agency which commissioned it. It had become quite clear from sessions with a wide range of religious and heritage interests in Wales, and from correspondence, that there is great public concern.

While noting this, our working party did ask religious and environmental bodies why nothing is being done. The answer seemed to be that, unlike England, Wales has no governmental framework to help chapels and churches assess and make provision for their redundant religious buildings. The religious organisations have been, and are still, asking for help and advice.

The Churches Conservation Trust in England has a budget of about £4 million a year, 70 per cent of which comes from government sources. Chapels in use in Wales have received £350,000 in total from government over the past four years. As yet there is no Historic Chapels Trust in Wales.

Cadw has stated that it wishes to support new initiatives to save redundant chapels, and this is encouraging. With the strong public interest that has been expressed, I am convinced that the historic chapels of Wales could be saved for future generations.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER WOODS,
74 Bootham, York.
September 25.

From Dr T. H. Hughes-Davies

Sir, Memories of the dark cloud of guilt and fear which chapels once spread over Wales may account for their present neglect.

Yours sincerely,
T. H. HUGHES-DAVIES,
Slades Cottage, Breamore,
Fordingbridge, Hampshire.

Quarantine law

From Mrs Angela Barklam

Sir, After reading the distressing account of the Danish diplomat's dog dying whilst in quarantine (report, September 25), it would be interesting to know how many animals over, say, the past ten years have developed rabies whilst in quarantine.

Yours faithfully,
ANGELA BARKLAM,
Oast Cottage, Odiham, Hampshire.
September 25.

Dicky birds

From Mrs Aline Templeton

Sir, You report today that an airline is to fly to North Africa a housemartin which is unfit to fly there by itself.

Is this going to prove the thin end of the wedge, with housemartins with sick notes in every overhead locker?

Yours faithfully,
ALINE TEMPLETON,
The Warden's House,
Glenalmond College,
Glenalmond, Perthshire.
September 25.

Read drawing, bend tube

The specialist firm of Iracraft runs its own programme of on-the-job training

NEXT year, Iracraft, a small, family-owned firm which supplies tube assemblies mainly for hydraulic applications such as excavators, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. It was set up in 1972 by Tim Bamford, who started supplying tubes to a number of customers, including his brother, J.C. Bamford, the man behind JCB earth-moving equipment. After Tim Bamford's death, his wife and daughters now own the firm.

With several well-known vehicle manufacturers among its customers, it is perhaps surprising it was not set up in the UK's industrial heartland. Instead, it is in Blandford Forum, on the River Stour, not far from Bournemouth.

David Morley, the company's

THE FIRM

managing director, joined the firm where his father was general manager shortly after it had been set up. He served a three-year apprenticeship as a welder and eventually became joint managing director with his father before the latter retired this year.

In the past few years, the company has done well despite the recession. "It was a tough time," admits Mr Morley. "We had to streamline the company and concentrate on our strengths. We were fortunate in having the customers we do have, because they have helped us through it."

More recently, Iracraft has won new customers such as Hitachi and Massey Ferguson. Last year the factory was extended and the workforce has increased from about 80 to the present figure of 130. The majority of these are semi-skilled or unskilled workers, with a smaller core of skilled workers.

With its specialist needs, the company has a programme of on-the-job training. "You can't go to college to learn how to bend tubes," says Mr Morley. "On the other hand, basic engineering skills are a good base on which to build — the ability to read drawings, for example. There are a lot of youngsters around who don't know the difference between a third angle and first angle projection."



David Morley: increasing the workforce

Engineering on track to intrigue youngsters



From left: Simon Gingell, Eleanor Court, Jamie Battista and Hayle Middlemas, all 13, from Lutterworth School, Leicester, were on a Rolls-Royce sponsored Eurostar carriage yesterday

MORE than 600 youngsters and their teachers helped the Engineering Employers' Federation to celebrate its 100th birthday by taking a day trip to France yesterday.

The idea was to bring to their attention two of the high points of British technology — the Eurostar

THE EXPERIENCE

train and the Channel Tunnel — as well as to show that engineering can be gritty and international. To that end, members of the cast of *Starlight Express* were on hand

(or rollerskate) at Waterloo as the children set off for lunch in Lille.

They had gathered from schools all around the country; about 75 children were flown in by the Armed Forces. The event was a curtain-raiser for 1997's Year of Engineering Success (YES).

youngsters to think engineering is dull'

supported by industry, government, trade unions, academia and engineering's professional institutions. More than 20 patrons, mostly big companies, have provided £700,000 and the Government £500,000 to cover running costs. More than £20 million is likely to be spent by a variety of organisations on the thousands of events.

Grabbing a pencil and pad, Dr Harris reduces an operation of enormous size and complexity to a rapidly drawn, three-dimensional matrix. "Along this side are the ten major themes: communications, energy, defence and so on. On this

side are the people we are aiming at: the public, young people, opinion formers, employers and engineers. Along this axis is time.

"For far too long we have allowed our youngsters to think that engineering is dull, routine and poorly paid. Talking from personal experience, at British Aerospace and British Gas, engineering is extremely exciting. It takes the most advanced scientific inventions and produces products for profit."

By getting companies to open their doors, YES will show that there is very little metal-bashing in the industry. What there is includes

nano-technology, software engineering, robotics and cyberspace.

"We have got some companies," Dr Harris says, "who are opening their doors and letting five and six year olds play with electron microscopes. Our intention is to get out into the schools, playgrounds and shopping malls."

She points out that the average pay for a chartered engineer is about £36,000 a year, which, she says, compares well with the law or medicine. In the top 100 UK companies, there are 84 chartered engineers in the boardrooms, just a little way behind accountants.

During the recession, engineering companies, like those in other sectors, were forced to cut jobs. This gave the industry a reputation of being a risky profession to go into — another myth which brings a rapid response from Dr Harris: "Unemployment in Britain is about 8 per cent; graduate unemployment is running between 4 and 5 per cent; if you look at unemployment for engineers it is around two-and-a-half per cent or less and that is not really unemployment, it is job changing. Our aim is to get those kind of messages across."

The Year of Engineering Success

is unique in its scope. It will, however, be some time before it is clear whether it has succeeded in improving the quantity and quality of engineering recruits. Changes in attitude should show up more quickly through surveys.

There have already been some events acting as curtain-raisers for YES. Yesterday, about 600 children travelled by Eurostar from London to Lille — a trip aimed at giving them an opportunity to study the impact of engineering on everyday life. It is initiatives such as this which Dr Harris hopes will begin to change the industry's image.

Catch them quickly in the classroom

Ercall Wood School prides itself on its close links with local firms and industry

THE SCHOOL

Charles Dickens's description of education as "a smattering of everything and a knowledge of nothing" would not go down well at Ercall Wood School near Telford in Shropshire. Through its network of links with local industries it makes certain that every pupil knows about and is prepared for the world of work. As a result, they take more naturally to engineering.

The school, a comprehensive with about 800 pupils aged 11 to 16, became grant-maintained in 1993 and Peter Rubery, the head teacher, feels it has benefited enormously from being self-governing. It always prided itself on its science, mathematics and technology teaching so it raised £100,000 sponsorship and was successful in bidding to become a specialist school.

Raising the money was achieved by presentations at local companies aimed at showing the breadth of its teaching — in the arts as well as the sciences — its popularity with parents and its academic success. This sum has been matched by the government and the school has been able to refurbish its technology block and spend generously in information technology.

The school is committed to giving the children a competitive edge when it comes to the world of work and has built strong local relationships, particularly with the engineering industry. "We recognise," says Mr Rubery, "the value of it and the need for it, not only in providing industry with the kind of people they want, but in building children's skills."

The focus on industry starts at the age of 14 with an industry week which involves setting up a link with a local company for

each department in the school. Each company then presents a challenge which will be tackled by about a dozen pupils working with a teacher and someone from the company.

Glynwed Foundries worked with pupils refurbishing the school's remembrance garden. As part of this scheme, the pupils designed a memorial plaque which was then produced by apprentices at Glynwed and now has a place of honour in the garden.

Leamarts, the Telford pen manufacturer, set the children the challenge of designing a fountain pen. The company put it into production

and, working through the school, helped the pupils set up a shop selling it and other pens, with the profits going to the school.

In later years there are other initiatives. Company representatives come to the school to help the pupils develop personal skills including completing a job application form and then going through a mock interview. After this, pupils have two weeks of work experience in an industry of their choice, which could be anywhere from a small shop, bank or building society to a big engineering company.

There are continuing links as well. A maths teacher demonstrates the concept of volume by getting pupils to work out the boot and interior capacity of cars brought to the school by the local car showroom. "It gives a real edge to their theory work in the classroom," says Mr Rubery, "and it is that work-related element to the curriculum that we try and promote through our industry links."

'We offer business the kind of people they really want'

We are one!

In direct response to the wishes of employers in our industry sector, on 1st October 1996 the

Engineering Training Authority

and the

Marine and Engineering Training Association

will merge to become...

EMTA

Engineering and Marine Training Authority

For more information on EMTA please contact Elaine Essery on

01923 238441

EMTA is a Strategic Partner of the Engineering Employers' Federation and a Patron of the Year of Engineering Success.



a world of opportunity...

...for graduates to join an exciting and truly dynamic organisation.

You'll come up against the kind of challenges that will stretch your mind further than you thought possible.

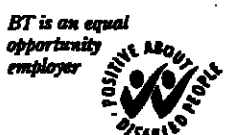
Apart from being a smart thinker, you'll need the confidence to take important decisions and carry them through.

In return, you'll get real job satisfaction, promotion opportunities in line with performance and, naturally, the financial rewards that come with success.

BT designs, markets, installs and manages state-of-the-art terrestrial and satellite-delivered communications networks - nationwide and globally.

We are acknowledged innovators in the fields of videotelephony and Interactive TV, as well as High Street video kiosk, cellular and broadband technologies. And that's just for starters!

So let's talk about where you could fit in. For further information, call **Freefone 0800 800870** (after 1st September) or contact your University Careers Service.



NEWS

Israel on brink of war as 50 die

Israel and the Palestinians were close to all-out war after Israel declared a state of emergency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The death toll in two days of fighting had exceeded 50. Israeli tanks were sent into the area for the first time since it was captured from the Arabs in the 1967 Six Day War. Western diplomatic sources said that the Middle East was closer to a wider Arab-Israeli war than for many years. Pages 1, 11

Gas cut-off warning before the bill

Thousands of people are getting final warnings from British Gas that they will be disconnected even though they have not received a bill. Red notices threatening disconnection are being sent to customers who are good payers around the country as a new billing system has thrown the company into a fresh round of chaos and controversy. Page 1

Geldof action

Bob Geldof, the pop star, launched an emergency High Court action in the Family Division following a police raid on the home of his former wife, Paula Yates, in which opium was allegedly found. Page 1

Birt apologises

John Birt, the Director-General of the BBC, was accused of caving in to Conservative pressure after apologising for shortcomings in an Anna Ford radio interview with Kenneth Clarke. Page 2

Bandits kill Briton

A British businessman has been shot dead as he tried to repel Albanian bandits trying to board his yacht which was moored in a Corfu harbour. Page 3

Girl died on slide

A girl aged three died when she became trapped by the neck on a children's slide. Safety standards are to be re-examined and a company is to be prosecuted. Page 5

Child health improves

The health of children under 15 has improved faster over the past 20 years than any other age group. Page 6

Cost of tax rise

Under Gordon Brown's proposals for a 50 per cent top tax rate, the television and radio presenter Chris Tarrant would pay almost £300,000 more on his newly negotiated £3 million salary. Page 7

Fruit is the prescription for longer life

Several apples a day — or any kind of fruit — will keep the cardiac surgeon away, researchers have found. Eating fresh fruit cuts the risk of dying from a heart attack by almost a quarter and from a stroke by almost one third. Overall, those who ate fruit daily increased their life expectancy by 20 per cent compared with those who ate fruit less frequently. Page 1

Divided Labour

More people now regard Labour as too dominated by its leader and divided than at any time for more than three years, according to the latest MORI poll. Page 8

Pensions row

Harriet Harman has launched a last ditch attempt to save the Labour leadership from an embarrassing defeat over pensions at the party conference. Page 9

France bruised

French pride suffered a triple blow: Brigitte Bardot declared France was no fun and threatened to emigrate; Isabelle Adjani said that Paris was dirty and moved to Switzerland; and Algerian schools announced that English would replace French as the main foreign language. Page 10

Afghan retreat

With forces of the rebel Taliban Islamic militia poised on the edge of Kabul, Afghan government troops appeared to be abandoning the capital. Page 11

Van Gogh doubts

A painting attributed to Vincent Van Gogh and worth £25 million may be a fake. Page 12

Olaf Palme theory

Eugene de Kock, the former head of a covert South African police hit squad, linked an apartheid spy to the assassination of Olaf Palme, the former Swedish Prime Minister. Page 13



The Prince of Wales was in high spirits yesterday when he joined the regulars at the Laurandy Day Centre near Wick

BUSINESS

Telecoms: BT made its second largest foreign investment by agreeing to pay £1.1 billion for a 25 per cent stake in a new company formed to compete with France Telecom. Page 23

Guinness: A strong first-half contribution from brewing helped the drinks group to a record half year profit. Page 23

Reshuffle: Robert Fleming, the merchant bank, has reshuffled executives at its Jardine Fleming fund management arm after the Hong Kong firm was fined £700,000 by a City watchdog. Page 23

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 2.5 to 3933.2. Sterling's index rose from 86.4 to 86.8 after a fall from \$1.5642 to \$1.5623 but a rise from DM2.3623 to DM2.3767. Page 26

SPORT

Football: Paul Merson, the Arsenal forward who had problems with drugs, alcohol and gambling, has been recalled to the England squad for the World Cup match against Poland. Page 44

Golf: Padraig Harrington made light of showers and a gusting wind to set a course record of 65 in the Smurfit European Open at the K Club near Dublin. Page 39

Sailing: The 14 skippers in the BT Global Challenge have drawn up an agreement about outside assistance on routing, one of the main areas of contention in the 33,000-mile race. Page 42

Boxing: Lennox Lewis is likely to meet Oliver McCall in the United States for the WBC heavyweight championship. Page 39

ARTS

Backlash: American pop star John Mellencamp has a message for Oasis: "Get lost. People aren't going to pay money to see a band that gets up and cusses them". Page 33

Songbird: Sheryl Crow confirms her great singer-songwriting potential with a fine new album, also reviewed today is the latest from the Lemonheads, and a collection of Nirvana's songs. Page 33

Mass of boys: One of Germany's best boys' choirs, the Tölzer Knabenchor, has collaborated with a British period-instrument ensemble on an impressive recording of Bach's Mass in B Minor. Page 34

Rigg superb: A magnificent performance by Diana Rigg in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at the Almeida Theatre. Page 34

FEATURES

Fashion victim: Joseph Connolly mingles with the glittering and the glamorous in a new festival of fashion in Florence. Page 14

Marriage stakes: Now that John F. Kennedy Jr. has walked the aisle, there is no contender for America's most eligible man. Page 14

Star charm: Mellifluous, circumspect and weary by the modern world, Sir Alec Guinness, 82, talks to Valerie Grove. Page 15

FOCUS

Focus: Engineering has launched a campaign to attract more youngsters into the field. Pages 20, 21

EDUCATION

Labour pangs: On the eve of the Headmaster's Conference, John O'Leary examines the fears independent schools have of a Labour government. Page 37

Screening process: The headmaster of Gordonstoun explains how a fly-on-the-wall television film may have benefited his pupils. Page 37

THE PAPERS

Benjamin Netanyahu is a dangerous politician. We must hope that he will stop playing with fire. And that his compatriots will remind him that the majority of them are in favour of peace. Otherwise the entire region will once again become a valley of tears and blood. — *Le Monde*

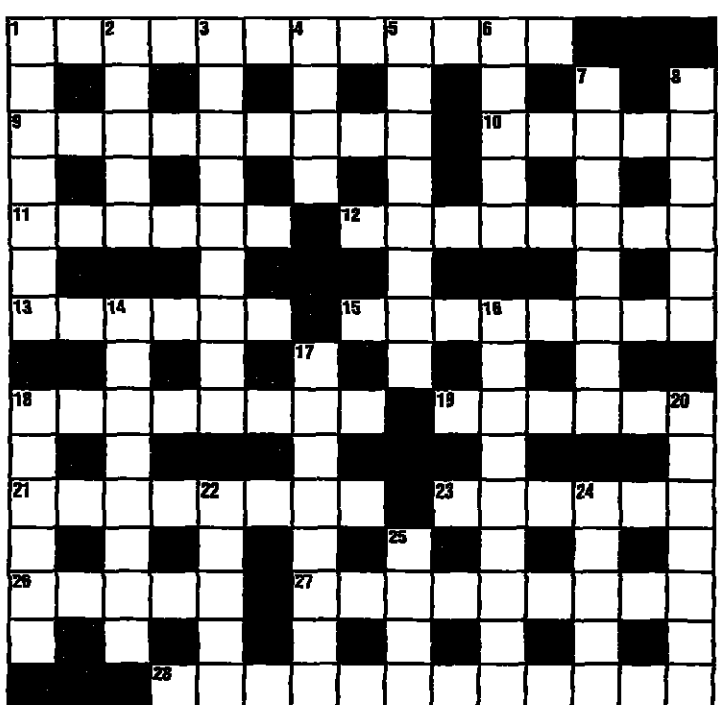
TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

MONEY GUIDE
16 pages of expert advice on savings and investment in our free Weekend Money Guide

CD OFFER
Top of the Brit parade: how to pick up the Mercury Music Prize CD for just £1

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,284



ACROSS

- 1 Accept a hand is to be dismissed (3,4,5).
- 9 Advise newcomer how to get things right (9).
- 10 Nitrogen injected into meat it's easy to buy (5).
- 11 Palace in two dioceses (6).
- 12 Bits of paper abandoned after use (8).
- 13 Area where men follow cult (6).
- 15 Exchanged blows, namely hit sharply (5).
- 18 Study some scripture and discuss (8).
- 19 Cut despicable worm (6).
- 21 Picture result of implementing short-term aim? (5).
- 23 Tycoon's lost a million, it is related (6).
- 26 College may be highly illuminating (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,283

QUADRILATERAL
UPPER
PREFACE
SCORE
THEME MARK BAND
OVEROID MULE
MINKSOP MONARCH
A T O A E
SAGE PURR THREW
T H M N A A O
ENTRY DECORATOR
R E T A A I O L
NOHOLDSBARRED

DOWN

- 2 Part's playing in fast-moving comedy (9).
- 25 Taking over marble hall for games (7,5).
- 1 Grass edges round forest providing recreation areas (7).
- 2 Being a little wet is in bad taste (5).
- 3 Chief's record currently unsurpassed (6,3).
- 4 Murdered — there's a twist (4).
- 5 Those who see the programme for royal reception (8).
- 6 Lifeline apparatus lacked a vital part (5).
- 7 During fresh rising, I had to be fearless (8).
- 8 Decided to go down in the record (6).
- 14 Pot, tin and basin mixed up (8).
- 16 Loss of 25 may develop in age, alas (9).
- 17 Note wife shortly is to get little boy for adoption (8).
- 18 Two groups of officers see the world (6).
- 20 Smoothly conniving about capitalized boat (7).
- 22 A flurry of shots beginning to send Oval wild (5).
- 24 Spirit, aged in wood for twelve years (5).
- 25 Old man experiencing agony (4).

Times Two Crossword page 44

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0801 500 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
Kent, Surrey, Sussex	702
Dorset, Hants & IOW	703
Devon & Cornwall	704
Wilt, Glouce, Avon, Somerset	705
Berks, Bucks, Oxon	706
Beds, Herts & Essex	707
Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambs	708
West Mid & Shropshire & Glam & Gwent	709
Shropshire, Hereford & Worcester	710
Central Midlands	711
East Midlands	712
Leics & Notts	713
Dyfed & Powys	714
Gwynedd & Clwyd	715
N.W. England	716
W & S Yorks & Dales	717
N.E. England	718
Cumbria & Lake District	719
S.W. Scotland	720
East & Fife, Lothian & Borders	721
E. Scotland	722
Grampian & E. Highlands	723
N.W. Scotland	724
Caithness, Orkney & Shetland	725
N.Ireland	726
Channel Islands	727

Weathercall is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.

AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic and roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 0300 401 followed by the appropriate code.

LONDON & SE TRAFFIC, ROADWORKS

Area within 125 miles of London.

Great Ouse	731
Great Ouse, Bedford, Bucks, Herts & Oxon	732
Great Ouse, Surrey, Sussex, Hants	733
Great Ouse, Kent only	734
National traffic and roadworks	735
West Country	736
Wales	737
Midlands	738
East Anglia	739
North-west England	740
North-east England	741
Scotland	742
Northern Ireland	743

AA Roadwatch is charged at 39p per minute (cheap rate) and 49p per minute at all other times.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest and lowest temperatures in degrees Celsius.

London	14	10
Edinburgh	12	8
Belfast	11	7
Cardiff	13	9
Birmingham	15	11
Manchester	14	10
Nottingham	16	12
Sheffield	15	11
Leeds	14	10
Bradford	13	9
York	12	8
Lincoln	11	7
Nottingham	10	6
Sheffield	9	5
Leeds	8	4
Bradford	7	3
York	6	2
Lincoln	5	1
Nottingham	4	0
Sheffield	3	-1
Leeds	2	-2
Bradford	1	-3
York	0	-4
Lincoln	-1	-5
Nottingham	-2	-6
Sheffield	-3	-7
Leeds	-4	-8
Bradford	-5	-9
York	-6	-10
Lincoln	-7	-11
Nottingham	-8	-12
Sheffield	-9	-13
Leeds	-10	-14
Bradford	-11	-15
York	-12	-16
Lincoln	-13	-17
Nottingham	-14	-18
Sheffield	-15	-19
Leeds	-16	-20
Bradford	-17	-21
York	-18	-22
Lincoln	-19	-23
Nottingham	-20	-24
Sheffield	-21	-25
Leeds	-22	-26
Bradford	-23	-27
York	-24	-28
Lincoln	-25	-29
Nottingham	-26	-30
Sheffield	-27	-31
Leeds	-28	-32
Bradford	-29	-33
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Lincoln	-31	-35
Nottingham	-32	-36
Sheffield	-33	-37
Leeds	-34	-38
Bradford	-35	-39
York	-36	-40
Lincoln	-37	-41
Nottingham	-38	-42
Sheffield	-39	-43
Leeds	-40	-44
Bradford	-41	-45
York	-42	-46
Lincoln	-43	-47
Nottingham	-44	-48
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Lincoln	-49	-53
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Lincoln	-55	-59
Nottingham	-56	-60
Sheffield	-57	-61
Leeds	-58	-62
Bradford	-59	-63
York	-60	-64
Lincoln	-61	-65
Nottingham	-62	-66
Sheffield	-63	-67
Leeds	-64	-68
Bradford	-65	-69
York	-66	-70
Lincoln	-67	-71
Nottingham	-68	-72
Sheffield	-69	-73
Leeds	-70	-74
Bradford	-71	-75
York	-72	-76
Lincoln	-73	-77
Nottingham	-74	-78
Sheffield	-75	-79
Leeds	-76	-80
Bradford	-77	-81
York	-78	-82
Lincoln	-79	-83
Nottingham	-80	-84
Sheffield	-81	-85
Leeds	-82	-86
Bradford	-83	-87
York	-84	-88
Lincoln	-85	-89
Nottingham	-86	-90
Sheffield	-87	-91
Leeds	-88	-92
Bradford	-89	-93
York	-90	-94
Lincoln	-91	-95
Nottingham	-92	-96
Sheffield	-93	-97
Leeds	-94	-98
Bradford	-95	-99
York	-96	-100

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will have sunny intervals and showers, the showers most frequent in the West. Some may be heavy, perhaps thundery. It will be a breezy day with temperatures mostly near the seasonal average.

Scotland and Northern Ireland: will be predominantly showery, but sheltered eastern parts of Scotland may see some good sunny spells. The showers may be heavy and thundery at times. It will be windy and there may be gales over exposed parts of the North and West. Temperatures should be generally about average.

London, SE England, E Anglia, E Midlands, E England, Central N, NE England: sunny spells and scattered showers, occasionally heavy and thundery. Wind south-westerly, mostly fresh. Max 19C (66F).

Central S England, W Midlands, Channel Isles, SW England, S Wales, N Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man: sunny intervals and occasional showers, some heavy or thundery. Wind west or south-west, fresh to strong. Max 18C (64F).

Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: sunny spells and a few showers, perhaps heavy or thundery. Wind south-westerly, fresh to strong. Max 16C (61F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, N Ireland: sunny intervals and blustery showers, heavy and thundery at times. Wind south-westerly, strong to gale. Max 15C (59F).

Orkney, Shetland: sunny spells and showers, heavy at times, perhaps thundery. Wind south or south-west, fresh to strong. Max 14C (57F).

Outlook: sunny intervals and blustery showers, rain for a time on Sunday. Windy.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm. b = bright, c = cloud, d = drizzle, ds = dust storm, dm = dust, f = fog, g = gale, h = hail.

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Temp	Wind	Cloud
Aberdeen	10	10	10	10	10	10
Anglo	11	11	11	11	11	11
Belfast	12	12	12	12	12	12
Birmingham	13	13	13	13	13	13
Bristol	14	14	14	14	14	14
Cardiff	15	15	15	15	15	15
Central	16	16	16	16	16	16
Edinburgh	17	17	17	17	17	17
Exeter	18	18	18	18	18	18
Gloucester	19	19	19	19	19	19
London	20	20	20	20	20	20
Manchester	21	21	21	21	21	21
Nottingham	22	22	22	22	22	22
Sheffield	23	23	23	23	23	23
Southampton	24	24	24	24	24	24
Stirling	25	25	25	25	25	25
Swansea	26	26	26	26	26	26
Torquay	27	27	27	27	27	27
Weymouth	28	28	28	28	28	28
Wolverhampton	29	29	29	29	29	29
Wrexham	30	30	30	30	30	30
Yarmouth	31	31	31	31	31	31

ABROAD

20	68	Corfu	23	73	Malaga	73	73	Rome	70	68
26	79	Cyprus	11	52	C	27	81	S Fizzo	17	63
28	82	Dublin	18	58	Malta	26	82	S Paulo	23	76
25	77	Dublin	20	69	Melb	15	59	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
27	81	Dublin	20	69	Melb	20	69	Sabzbur	13	63
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